THE CHURCH UNDER COMMUNISM

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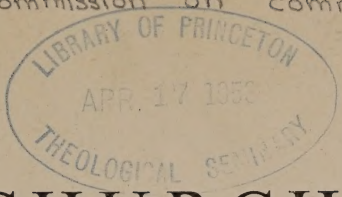

THE CHURCH UNDER COMMUNISM

SCM PRESS LTD
56 BLOOMSBURY STREET
LONDON

INTRODUCTION

THIS is the second Report of the Commission on Communism appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1949. It was presented to the Assembly in May 1952. The previous Report, presented in May 1951, has been published under the title *The Challenge of Communism*. The Commission is still engaged on its remit (which is quoted in *The Challenge of Communism*), and hopes to publish future Reports on other aspects of the subject. The major part of this Report contains certain well-authenticated facts regarding the impact of Communism on the Christian Churches, and the reaction of these Churches, in various parts of Europe and in China. It also deals with some of the crucial issues raised by these facts.

The Commission has all along been at pains to emphasise that it would be both erroneous and futile for the Church to initiate merely a negative, anti-Communist drive. Its strategy must lie in a positive, constructive policy, based on the conviction that in the Christian Gospel, in its full implications, lies the salvation of human society. What is not sufficiently grasped is that the Christian Church, by the very nature of its Gospel, is committed to a world-wide enterprise. Too much of the current outlook in congregations is parochial in its range. Too often there is little awareness of the corporateness of the Christian mission in the world, a corporateness that underlies all denominational differences and, in some respects, even doctrinal differences. The situation we are facing in the challenge of Communism is one that calls for a new Catholicity of outlook and of action throughout the entire Church. The Ecumenical movement will not make real headway among the rank and file of the Church unless and until it is realised that this colossal force, that is to-day shaking the world, is making a determined attack on the great Christian fundamentals, upon which *all* the various Communions are built. There is a sense in which Communism is the most vital and dynamic ecumenical movement in the world at present.

There is in operation a global strategy, which in thirty-five years has succeeded in dominating 800 million souls, a third of the world's population, and is busily engaged day by day in a coercive system of 're-education' of the masses in Communist ideology. It is, as the Report points out (p. 50), a matter of serious concern to the whole

Christian Church and its world mission that millions in Eastern Asia are being intensively indoctrinated in a materialist and atheistic creed. The fact is that among the widely scattered millions of the human race and in vast areas of the world's affairs, Christianity exerts, as yet, only a very limited influence.

In Europe, millions in our traditionally Christian civilisation have lost any vital hold they ever had on the Christian Faith and Ethic. Astounding as is the advance of science and technology, rich and welcome as are the benefits we have reaped, there is no doubt that Secularism has swept like a plague across the continent. Spiritual values are swamped by secular interests in the daily life and thought of many, if not of most people, and this has led to an apostasy from the moral principles which, for the most part, have formed the basic structure of Western Civilisation.

Millions of young people all over Europe and in large areas of Asia, eager to find a way out of the spiritual vacuum and moral chaos of our time, turn to Communism as a Faith that provides not only political but moral leadership and purpose. A virile Faith, even though false, always exerts more influence and calls forth greater allegiance than a Faith which is true but has lost its driving power, and whose devotees are paralysed by indifference.

The conflict in which humanity is engaged to-day is fundamentally ideological. The facts given in the Report are but a small part of growing evidence showing what terrible tragedy befalls society when religion is discarded and its moral sanctions flouted. The strongest bulwark against Communism is a vital Faith; the greatest peril is a spiritual vacuum. Communism is forcing the Church back on her true work—the propagation of the Christian Faith, a Faith which redeems the whole nature of man and the whole structure of society. Such a task demands more than preaching; it involves the unique and essential part which laymen and women alone can play. To achieve that task a system of adult religious education is needed.

Sir Richard Livingstone has pointed out, with profound truth, that such subjects as philosophy, history, literature and economics can be truly appreciated and comprehended only by those who have had experience of life. In a very real sense, religion belongs to that group. The religious instruction of youth must be pursued with more efficiency than ever. But, if the present situation is to be met and mastered, it will only be by pressing forward with a system of instruction whereby adult Church members, and particularly office-bearers and leaders of

organisations, will be able to meet in informal groups, receive instruction, be free to ask questions and have discussion, and so arrive at intelligent conviction. This surely would go far to create a growing nucleus of convinced Christian men and women, able to permeate and strengthen the life of society and save it from the moral rot and social disintegration which Secularism inevitably brings.

This is not an easy task; but exactly that kind of thing is what Communism is doing with ominous success in its policy of ' re-education.' The present situation seems to demand that adult religious education should become part of the regular work of the Christian Church, such teaching being adapted to different levels of education and experience. Above all, the great Christian truths must be taught and comprehended in their essential relevance to the crucial problems of our time. It is hoped that the Report now made available to a wider public may contribute to that end.

G. M. D.

I

SURVEY OF CHURCH LIFE UNDER COMMUNISM

THE REPORT to this General Assembly opens with a survey of the position of the Church in the more important Communist-controlled countries. In the first place something has been said of the changing history of its relations with the State in the centre of the Communist world—the Soviet Union itself. Then attention is given to some of the countries which came under Communist control as a result of the Second World War. As Communism extended westwards, the policy which had been developed as a result of trial and error in Soviet Russia was applied to other countries and adapted to the local religious situation. In these countries we see at present a more or less advanced stage of the same process which has been carried out in Russia. It is important, therefore, in judging reports from the different Eastern European countries, to bear in mind the changes of tactics which are to be described below and the various stages of persecution which the Russian Church passed through. Although persecution in some of these countries may be indirect and not open, although it may not have reached the ultimate stage, it will be found that the same methods of attack which were employed with the avowed object of suppressing religion in Russia are recurring in other countries. Where Communism has had time to work, the results are similar to those we have seen in the Soviet Union. Where Communist influence is more recent, and where the traditions of the country are more resistent, the policy is modified and applied more gradually. Finally, an attempt is made to examine the situation as it exists in the great Republic of China.

Relatively more attention has been given to China for two reasons. Probably less is known about the recent history of China by the members of the Church in Scotland than about European countries. In any case the Chinese situation has developed more recently than the others. The Chinese situation probably bears a closer analogy than do the others to the situation in those parts of the world which are in the greatest danger of being attracted to the Communist cause, and in which this country has the opportunity and indeed the duty to take action which might serve to avert such a calamity.

A. THE SOVIET UNION

Russia became Bolshevik in the Revolution of October 1917. The Revolution was inspired by the teaching of Marx. As was described in earlier Reports of the Commission, Marxism views religion as not only superstition, but as socially harmful superstition, its essential function being to make the exploited content with their lot. In spite of changes in its tactics towards the Church, the Soviet Union remains unrepentantly hostile to the Church, and still cherishes the hope of destroying the Christian faith. In a series of official lectures published in 1951 the following statements were made:—

> 'The destruction of religious survivals is a necessary condition of the training of conscious builders of a Communist Society.' (E. MANUILOV.)
>
> After quoting leaders of the Sects of Baptists as stating for all to hear that the Soviet régime and the Communist Party were nothing other than a product of Christianity; that 'the ideals of the Soviet régime are the ideals of Christianity'; V. G. Sokolov, writing in September 1950, comments: 'To reconcile religion with Communism is to conceal the reactionary anti-scientific substance of a sectarian ideology in an ingenious verbal husk.'
>
> 'Religion cannot help hindering the building of Communism, for it represents an anti-scientific reactionary ideology . . . the Komsomol by-laws oblige a Komsomol member to struggle against the survivals of religious prejudices. Belief in God and participation in Church ceremonies are incompatible with the Komsomol, and there can be no compromises here.' (KOMSOMOL PRAVDA, 25th April 1951.)

These quotations should be enough for simple people who still think that Christianity and Russian Communism can go hand in hand.

Since the Revolution, however, the Russian State has on several occasions found it necessary to change its tactics. The *first attack* was direct and consisted in violent persecution. The State was afraid that the Orthodox Church would be a centre of opposition and therefore sought to crush it. The only way it knew, in the circumstances of the times, was to shut the churches and eliminate the clergy. Property

was confiscated; the clergy were called the servants of the bourgeois. They were deprived of the vote; their rations were denied them or given only on the lowest category; where the churches were still open rents and taxes were increased. The Church was forbidden to educate its youth. By a decree of 13th June 1921 no one under eighteen years of age was permitted to receive instruction.

Timashev, who is generally regarded as authoritative, says in his book, ' Religion in Soviet Russia,' that in the first six years of the Soviet State over 1000 priests and 28 Bishops were executed. At the same time an endeavour was made to undermine what remained of the influence of the Church by setting up what was called the ' Living Church ' (May 1922), by which act the State hoped to draw to its side such a number of the priests as would hopelessly weaken the Orthodox Church. This was entirely unsuccessful. Neither the priests nor the people responded, and the Living Church was dead in thirteen months.

By 1922 the State had seen the folly of its methods, and the second attack, which continued for seven years, adopted rather more indirect methods. There was less active persecution, but administrative measures continued to be taken against the Church. It was slandered in every possible way. A publishing house, known as the Godless, was set up, and a school was provided for training in anti-religious propaganda. In 1925 the League of Militant Atheists was born. Scurrilous cartoons of the Deity were published. In 1923, Church Holy Days became working days. As absence from work is a treasonable offence against the State, and liable to heavy penalties, the observance of the Christian Festivals was seriously hampered. This situation was made worse when in 1929 a week of six days was adopted. In 1923, religious instruction even within Church buildings was forbidden, while in the following year the number of children to whom religious instruction could be given in private was limited to three at one time.

From the time of Peter the Great the Tsars had prevented the Church from electing a Patriarch. In the relative freedom which the first days of the Revolution brought, Tikhon was elected to this office. However on his death in 1925 the Government forbade the appointment of a successor on the Patriarchal Throne. The police arrested each acting Patriarch as he was elected. In 1927 the Metropolitan Sergius of Novgorod was left undisturbed as acting Patriarch after he had made the following declaration: ' We must show, not by words only but by deeds, that loyal citizens of the U.S.S.R. are not only those who are indifferent to Orthodoxy, or those who have betrayed it,

but the faithful for whom Orthodoxy, with all its dogmas and traditions . . . is as dear as truth and life. We wish to be Orthodox and at the same time to recognise the Soviet Union for our civil fatherland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes, and whose defeats are our defeats.' This declaration opened the way for a partial recognition of the Church, and gave to it a certain freedom which, though limited, is more than at one time seemed likely. There were fluctuations of policy. The Constitution of 1929, which allowed 'freedom of worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda,' was followed by concessions around the time of the promulgation of the 1936 Constitution. Priests were given the vote, and Christmas and Easter were restored. Again the years 1937 to 1939 saw a fresh outburst of persecution. People were imprisoned for forming associations for Bible reading, and clergy were put to death. On the whole, in the thirties the attack had become psychological and educational. The authorities would seem to have become convinced that they could eradicate religion in the younger generation by these methods, and that in due course the older generation would die out and the Church with them. Although sporadic outbursts of violence continued to occur, and although all charitable, social and cultural activities were forbidden to it, the Orthodox Church could at least breathe and hope for better things. However the harm which the Church suffered during the first twenty-three years of Bolshevik rule is set forth eloquently in the following table of figures taken from official Soviet statistics:—

	1917	1940
Orthodox Churches .	46,457	4,225
Priests	50,960	5,665
Bishops	130	28
Monasteries . . .	1,026	37

The Second World War brought a remarkable change of tactics on the part of the Soviet Government. In order to persuade the Russian masses to fight against the invading Germans, appeal was made to Russian patriotism. The Russia of tradition was resuscitated and glorified. Alexander Nevsky, Peter the Great, and Suvarov became again national heroes. In this build-up of patriotic morale the Church was assigned an essential place. On 21st August 1941 Moscow radio called upon 'all God-loving inhabitants of the occupied territories' to rise in defence of their religion against the German invaders who were 'menacing the very existence of Christianity and seeking the

overthrow of Christ the King, to instal instead the philosophy of Alfred Rosenberg.' Anti-religious propaganda was stopped. The Church was given new privileges, and was permitted to elect Sergius Patriarch. A theological academy was opened, and the Church was permitted to publish the 'Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate.' It is estimated that by 1947 the number of Bishops had increased to 67, with 3 Archbishops besides the Patriarch. The number of churches open had grown to 22,000. In addition to the Theological Academy at Leningrad there were 12 theological seminaries in different parts of the Soviet Union. The Church loyally supported the Soviet régime throughout the war. By its prayers, its interest in the sick and the wounded, and its ministry in the homes of the people, it helped to maintain their morale. It had gathered money to pay for instruments of war. Many people, both within the Soviet Union and outside its borders, took the view that the Soviet authorities would never attempt to deprive the Church of the high position which had been given to it during the war. But Communism is fundamentally anti-Christian and, while its short-term policy may vary according to circumstances, its ultimate aim remains constant—the destruction of the Christian Church.

Even during the springtime which the Church enjoyed during the war a new attack upon religion was being planned.

In 1945 the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party 'called the attention of all Soviet and public organisations to the necessity for developing wide educational work among the masses, for arranging lectures on natural science, and for exposing untiringly all superstitions and prejudices.' The new large encyclopedia says: 'The struggle for the final defeat of religious survivals is being waged by the joint forces of all Educational, Trade Union, and Young Communist (Komsomol) Organisations, and by the forces of the whole of Soviet Society.'

In 1947 the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge was set up, its main duty being to combat religion by spreading popular science. Local officials and teachers were expected to attend its seminars for training. And in 1949 the Statutes of the Young Communists' League prescribed that its members should 'fight against drunkenness, hooliganism, the survivals of religious prejudices, and an uncomradely attitude against women.' No one will object to this creation and teaching of a Communist ethic so far as it is worthy, but the lowering of religion to the level of social vices is an indication of the point of view of the Soviet Union.

The present attack has three elements in it:—

(*a*) Against religion it brings up all the usual materialist arguments, placing special emphasis on the teaching of such scientific theories as are supposed to provide an explanation of all things. Religion is taught as having its origin in fear and ignorance, as rising out of economic and social conditions within society, and as a means of exploiting the weak and keeping them weak and poor by consoling them with an imaginary heaven hereafter.

(*b*) Religion is associated with the West—the capitalist enemy. Many public utterances, with the authority of the State behind them, teach that the Churches are the agents of the Western Powers, with the result that many Christians are frightened, especially if they are in positions of responsibility, lest they be charged with espionage if in public or private they express a desire for Western contacts.

(*c*) Communist propaganda is now directed to showing how inspiration in science, in morality, in social relations, and in material achievements has followed from the acceptance of Communist ideology. Few achievements are allowed to the credit of the West in any sphere. The West is decadent. How can any good thing come out of it?

In addition to all this the Churches are—all of them—subject to the administrative control of special Councils. One governs the Orthodox Church and one the other Churches. The Chairman of the Council is usually present if any important decision has to be taken by the Church Courts.

While more churches are open than in the early days of the Revolution the number open is still insufficient, especially in the country districts where many churches lie in ruins or are used as store-houses. The Church has not sufficient printing facilities; the liturgy cannot be purchased anywhere openly, and no bookshop is allowed to sell religious literature. The high places in the Soviet régime are open only to Communists. Most careers are virtually closed to practising Christians.

It may be asked what are the reasons for the present policy. One of the Soviet public lecturers recently gave three reasons:—

(*a*) ' The Soviet Constitution is the most democratic in the world and guarantees freedom of religious worship to all citizens as

well as freedom of anti-religious propaganda.' It will be noted that there is no freedom of religious propaganda.

(*b*) 'All workers have one and the same enemy—Capitalism, Exploitation, the Imperialist vultures.' The workers must be united, and therefore 'the struggle against religion must be waged in such a way that under present conditions it strengthens the moral and political unity of Soviet society.'

(*c*) 'Administrative measures and active coercion in the struggle against religion serve more to strengthen religious feeling than to destroy it.'

The sum of the matter is that although the Churches in the Soviet Union are not at present subject to open persecution, and are even allowed certain liberties in return for their active support of the Government, the Churches are in truth prevented as effectively as ever before from spreading the Christian faith. Very often what liberties they have received are obstructed by administrative action. The State is no longer fighting the Church as an opponent, but is drawing away the youth from the Church by all the means of a vast and ever-active and penetrating propaganda. In due course a generation of indoctrinated unbelievers will leave the Church high and dry, and out of real touch with the people. The Soviet authorities are already persuaded that along this way the Church can never be a rival loyalty but is already the unquestioning servant of the State; therefore it may be quite safely left to administer its services until only a handful will want its ministrations.

B. THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

(i) Bulgaria

According to the last census of 1934, Bulgarian religious groups are:—

Orthodox—5,128,890; Moslem—683,000; Roman Catholic—56,000; Jews—20,000; Protestants—15,744.

The governing Communist Party believes in the closest control of every aspect of the nation's life. It is bitterly hostile to religion in any form, and has for undenied, if long term, aim the disappearance of them all, and of Christianity in particular. The Government knows now that it cannot simply achieve this result by decree. It has been

made aware that the present generation cannot be turned away from religion completely, and calculates that from twenty-five to fifty years must pass before a religionless State can be created. Moreover, the Government believes that certain propagandist advantages are gained by the retention of a State-controlled Church—a Church regarded as merely part of the Civil Service. The Orthodox Church, though officially disestablished, is regarded as the State Church, or in the words of the official decree: ' A national people's democratic Church.' Its links with Russia and its traditional Pan-Slavism give it some propaganda use for the Communists, if it is kept firmly under control. The methods used to make this control effective are:—

(1) The regulation in detail of Church activities by law. This is the Law concerning Churches, passed in February 1949. Its main provisions are: the forbidding of all Church schools, youth organisations, hospitals, or orphanages; the State censorship of all Church publications and teaching programmes, and the appointment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of all Church dignitaries.

(2) The removal of all members of the Orthodox Hierarchy of independent mind. The chief example here is the case of the Exarch Stefan, who was replaced in September 1948. Regarded formerly as a worldly ecclesiastic, he had risen to new spiritual stature under the pressure to make him conform to the Government's policy.

(3) The formation of a State-controlled Priests' Trade Union. The members of this Union are often unfrocked priests, who are reintroduced into the Church under pressure with the object of persuading the clergy not to hold strictly to doctrine and to discard clerical garb, the orthodox beard, and uncut hair. They also publish a Church paper, ' Tzerkoven Vestnik,' purporting to express the loyalty of the hierarchy to the Government.

(4) The organisation in the provinces of lectures and political meetings at the times of Church services. In extreme cases village, though not town, churches have been requisitioned for store-houses.

(5) The abolition of Saints Days, &c. Christmas has been officially renamed ' The January Holidays.'

(6) The discontinuation of any religious instruction in schools and the introduction of active anti-religious propaganda.

A new Constitution of the Orthodox Church came into force on 1st January 1951. Under its terms the Bulgarian Exarchate has been raised or restored to a Patriarchate. The Holy Synod, in which is

vested the spiritual leadership of the Church, consists of the Patriarch and the other heads of dioceses. Legislative powers are exercised by the National Church Council consisting of Bishops, priests, and laymen. Great emphasis is laid by the 'Tzerkoven Vestnik' on the active collaboration of the laity in the new organisation of the Church which, the writers claim, marks a return to the democratic spirit of the early Christian Church. Some gain there may be, but it is certain that there has been no gain in the Church's freedom.

Despite the shackling law concerning Churches and the other strangling controls tabulated above, despite the anti-religious thrust on the young throughout the educational day, the Churches retain a profound hold on the hearts of the people, especially in the countryside. Droughts are widely interpreted as divine punishment, there have been widespread reports of Visions, and undoubtedly superstition mingles perhaps more than formerly with a faith that is fervent and steadfast. In Sofia the Cathedral and larger churches are always well attended and often they are thronged. That a Church, forced to collaborate with a hostile, anti-religious Government and deprived of almost all functions except that of public worship, should have retained its influence in the hearts of so many is a marvel and beyond our ability to explain. But this at least can be said. Among the Slav Orthodox there is a profound congregationalism. The congregation is the repository of truth, it is the brotherhood of the faithful in whose mutual love resides the revelation. To leave the congregation is for a believer a heavy matter, it is to become a leaf severed from the tree. Further, what Anderson writes of Russia is true also of Bulgaria: 'Men of deep faith and spiritual humility, yet bold in their knowledge of the power of God to overcome all evil, have come to understand that a mighty instrument is still at their disposal in the cult and sacramental life of the Orthodox Church, as they strive to make the love of God and salvation in Christ known to the people.'

The Government's action against the non-Orthodox Churches has been similar, but with a more ruthless determination to uproot and destroy completely. The Roman Catholic Church, which, under the Law concerning Churches, cannot communicate with the Vatican, was stricken in the spring of 1950 by the arrest of its leaders on the charge of being in possession of arms, and by the disappearance of the priest in charge of St Joseph's Church in Sofia. The fate of the Evangelical Churches has been even more terrible. In June 1948 the fifteen members of the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Churches, which incorporates

the Methodists, Adventists, Baptist and Congregational Churches, disappeared. In March 1949, headed by Pastor Vasil Ziapkov, they reappeared—in the dock—accused of espionage and currency offences. Each pastor made an obviously forced confession and all were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The situation of these small Churches is indeed desperate. They have no funds, no leaders, and no outside contacts. They have nothing beyond the faith of existing members to keep them alive.

(ii) Hungary

For all practical purposes it is sufficient to consider only two of the Protestant Churches in Hungary; for the smaller ones—Baptist, Methodist, Nazarene, &c.—are very small indeed and can be left out of account. The two in question, however, are strong Churches, deeply rooted in the history of the country, commanding great loyalty from their numerous members, and well organised. The larger of the two is the Reformed Church with about 2,000,000 souls in its communion; the smaller is the Lutheran with about 500,000. The first is a distinctly Magyar Church; the second largely composed of people of German descent. Altogether the Protestants of Hungary comprise rather less than 30 per cent of the population; but have always counted for far more in the life of the country than even their considerable numbers would suggest.

To-day both of these Churches and all the smaller ones, too, appear to be active collaborators with the Government in spite of the fact that the Government is Communist and is closely bound to Russia. In Church publications and in public utterances of Church leaders Hungarian socialism is extolled, and for the Government and its policies that Church would appear to have nothing but praise. The Western Democracies, which formerly were ' the glass of fashion and the mould of form,' are now viewed with disapproval. True they are not criticised by Churchmen with the asperity commonly used by politicians ; but the mood is the same. They are the wrong-doers in the world, those mainly responsible for its ills. The Hungarian Protestant Churches, for instance, lend full official support to the Partisans for Peace Movement, regard Russia as a benevolent and generous giant, strong for peace, and profess to see warlike designs in all the tortuous manœuvres of the West. They take the regular Party line about Korea and even

Malaya, and could, it is probable, be counted on to do the same in any other disputed case that turned up.

In this country we hear and read of the misdeeds of the Hungarian Government, the terror of the Secret Police, unjust arrests and imprisonment of large numbers of apparently innocent individuals, and arbitrary expulsions of decent people from their houses. But as far as can be seen nothing of this is apparent to those who speak for the Hungarian Church to-day.

To people living still in a country organised on traditional Church lines this is very deplorable, and to such as are sincere Christians perplexing in the extreme. How can such things be?

In part the explanation is simple: in a well-organised Communist State the Government and its policies are not to be criticised in public by outsiders, such as Churchmen or journalists. 'Disruptive tendencies' are summarily dealt with, and any Church leader or Church periodical that displayed them would be quickly suppressed. As for the support lent by Church spokesmen to the foreign policy of the Communist Powers, it must be remembered that the incessant peace propaganda presents the facts of the world situation, and the particular questions of Korea, and atomic warfare, in such a one-sided way, that is entirely conceivable that sincere Christians, living in a country deeply scarred by war, might believe that the Party line in this case is right and therefore lend it their genuine support.

But there is more to it than just this.

There is, first of all, the terrible history of recent years. Hungary was ruined by the First World War. During the twenties and thirties she made a wonderful recovery—superficially. Beneath the glitter of the surface there was much poverty and frustration, and discontent with the existing state of affairs, for different reasons, was rife at every level of society. Then came the Second World War and the enormities of the Nazis. The part played in it by the Hungarian State was ignominious. The suicide of Paul Teleki, the Prime Minister, when Hitler forced the Hungarians to join him in his invasion of Yugoslavia, was an omen. All decent, honourable Hungarians were afflicted with a deep sense of shame and impotence, as the shabby and sordid events rolled on, culminating in the dreadful atrocities of the Szalasi régime. Among these were the sincere Christians in the Protestant Churches, and especially those who belonged to the active missionary element, organised in a large number of societies and groups with particular enthusiasms. In this respect the writings and speeches of Albert

Bereczky are revealing and significant. For him, and for thousands like him, a horror of thick darkness spread over his beloved land and people during these terrible years. All the woes that followed the defeat of Germany and the accursed Hungarian régime that supported her were almost welcomed as an expiation for national sin. The Russians were hailed as liberators, and the least was made of the excesses of the Russian soldiery. The Revolution was a glorious opportunity to purge the horribly infected body politic, and socialist policies were welcomed as means to revive its health and give social justice a chance. Those who had compromised the Church by doubtful or feeble leadership in the evil day were swept from their seats of authority, and new men who abhorred the past and were ready to welcome the chance to make a new beginning occupied their places.

The position was made easier by the Church policies of the Revolutionary Governments—first non-Communist and then Communist. No attack was made on the Churches; on the contrary, the State gave generous aid to help them rebuild their many shattered buildings. True, the Church schools were nationalised; but Protestants, especially of the Bereczky type, who were well aware of the fact that in many Christian countries there were no Church schools, were not to be shocked by this. The State, too, stated frankly that its policy was to end State subsidies to Churches; but for long the idea of separation of Church and State had won the approval of the best Protestant Churchmen. Besides the State was generous both in providing extraordinary help in the critical post-war period and in allowing the Churches twenty years to organise their own schemes of self-support. There was, in fact, little to object to in the general Church policy of the Government.

Furthermore all accounts agree that a remarkable upsurge of life invaded the Protestant Churches under the new régimes, beginning in the Peasant Party period and continuing to the present day. The churches are full, the people are demonstratively loyal. Great energy and self-sacrifice have been shown in rebuilding the many waste places left by the war. Reforms in the work and worship of the Church, long talked about, have been effected—*e.g.*, a new hymnary has been published. Good work has been done on a Church Service Book, the Missionary work has been much better organised—and all this at a time when what might have been expected was exhaustion and debility. So within the Church this abounding life fills ministers and church workers with a satisfaction that compensates for many trials that come

from the world outside. They are therefore disposed to be thankful for the way things have fallen out, rather than critical of the treatment of the Church by the régime, even where it might be criticised.

That is not to say that complacency with the present situation is general. In a Police State it is always difficult to estimate how much reality there is behind public appearances, but it is safe to say that while the feeling is general that things might be much worse and that the inner life of the Church is astonishingly vigorous, there are many who do not love the Communist régime. These do not share the view that Stalin is a demi-god and the Russians great-hearted big brothers much injured by the wicked capitalist world. They are sick of the incessant din of the propaganda machine, bored with its jargon, and exhausted with its marches, parades, and demonstrations. It makes them ashamed to read the maudlin outpourings of workers and peasants in the press, urging one another on to fresh exploits of production or vituperation, and expressing their moon-struck infatuation with the idols and ideals of the Government in articles of incredible silliness. These people, too, don't believe that the Western Powers are anything like what the Communists make them out to be, nor are they insensitive to the asperities of the present régime, or easily persuaded to accept them philosophically as temporary necessities, or inevitable mistakes, that will soon be past and forgotten in the glorious future.

It is certain that these sceptics are numerous and many of them influential. But their scepticism must be muted, and others of a different mind put forward as the leaders and representatives of the Church. There is no evidence that the sceptics view these new believers with resentment. On the contrary they have drawn the attention of foreign critics to the fact that the Churchmen, who are openly friendly to the régime, are the screen and wall behind which the others are kept in comparative safety. While they disagree with them and even detest their social and political opinions and affiliations, they feel obscurely grateful to them for their personal safety and for shielding the Church from a hostility that could be formidable indeed.

The Roman Church

The Roman Catholic Church accounts for about two-thirds of the people of Hungary. Formerly it was enormously rich and powerful; its Primate, the Archbishop of Esztergom, was a Prince of the Realm, and most of its Bishops enjoyed the income of large landed estates.

Materially it was ruined by the Second World War; its great wealth was swept away by the Land Reform. The Primate, Cardinal Mindszenthy, did not disguise his hostility to the Communists, who subsequently took over the government of the Republic, and paid for his opposition, as all the world knows. As elsewhere, the dissident movement within the Roman Catholic Church, led by certain priests, was encouraged by the Government, and eventually, in August 1950, the bench of Bishops was brought to heel. A formal agreement was made between Church and Government, pledging the former to give the latter its complete loyalty and support. It was signed on behalf of the Church by Joseph Grösz, Archbishop of Kalocsa, who had followed Cardinal Mindszenthy as leader of the Hungarian Bishops. Last year, 1951, he also followed him to prison, after a trial that sounded like the echo of the *cause célèbre* of 1949. Thus in Hungary, as in other Eastern European countries, the Roman Catholic Church has been detached from the anti-Communist policy of the Vatican.

(iii) East Germany

In the Eastern, or Russian, Zone of Germany the main Church is Lutheran, and the lesser Church Roman Catholic; otherwise the relationships between Church and State are the same as in Russia.

Here a voice has been speaking with the utmost courage to the Russian authorities on their treatment of the Church and on their outraging the conscience of believers. On 23rd April 1950 the voice of Bishop Dibelius was heard throughout the Lutheran Church of Berlin-Brandenburg. It said this:—

> 'The cries of our Church-folk daily rise . . . " we are being forced to say things which for truth's sake we cannot say, to do things against which our conscience rebels, to approve decisions with which we cannot agree. Yet by our refusal to co-operate we are in constant danger of losing our freedom (*i.e.*, of being imprisoned), our livelihood and the means of supporting our children . . ." Most pitiful of all are the cries of parents whose children, under pressure from schools and youth organisations, are starting to write and say things which they do not believe. They are made to despise the Christian faith and are taught that there is no God and that Christ never existed. . . . No

State authority has the right to force an ideology on people with whose beliefs and conscience it is not in accord. . . . It is a sin to force men to lie and to lead children into the paths of untruth. . . . Do not let your conscience be dulled (it exhorts the hearers), do not in your daily life reject the truth as of no importance nor accept decent as inevitable. Finally, we proclaim to those who even now have shut their hearts to the call of Christ that His truth can make them free also . . . He alone enables us to be men and brothers one of another."

On the same day the Bishop wrote to the Premier with equal courage:—

"This is no political offensive, nor does it indicate a change in the firm policy of the Church to leave political matters to the individual, or to refrain from interfering in political decisions taken by the State. But when the faith of baptised Christian children or the freedom of our co-religionists to act in accordance with the dictates of conscience is in danger then the Church must take action in defence of these things.

The Church does not fear the State, but wants no quarrel with it. . . ."

To avoid conflict the State, says the Bishop, should —

(1) Announce that no attacks would be made on the Christian faith either in schools or in political meetings. Political belief is not the affair of the State, but a matter for free decision by the citizen.
(2) Declare that all political sections must unite.
(3) Ensure freedom of speech and protection from summary arrest, as guaranteed in the Constitution.

The letter ends thus:—

"No one can with impunity set himself above God's commandments. No State can flourish unless it possess valid authority, and this authority it can never have so long as the mass of the people feel that what they cannot really approve will nevertheless be forced on them. Only when true freedom of conscience is assured can the State be given full credit for its achievements."

These quotations give a more vivid picture of the state of affairs in the Eastern Zone of Germany than anything that could be written from the outside. There is in both the Pastoral Letter and in the private letter the authentic Church speaking. The letters are conciliatory but firm. They show just where the Church stands, and are equally frank on the place of the State. These letters had an immediate result. The Government set about inquiring as to the causes of the complaint, and put the blame on over-zealous local officials.

There is some evidence that the Government is trying a policy of more generous treatment for the Church. Considerable facilities were granted for church people in the Eastern Zone to attend the Kirchentag held in Berlin in July 1951. It is reported that whereas until quite recently the Government had discouraged theological learning and by every indirect means sought to reduce the effectiveness of theological faculties in the East German Universities, there has been an apparent reversal of policy. Government scholarships are now being offered to enable students to study theology. This change in policy is doubtless to be understood in relation to the question of West German rearmament and German unity. With regard to the students of theology, some suspect that the Government have decided that they can afford this gesture, since all graduating students have to pass a political test for which they have to undergo a course of instruction.

(iv) Poland

The Polish Government were hardly restored to authority when they denounced the Concordat between Church and State in Poland dating from 1925, and immediately thereafter the Roman Catholic Church was attacked. At least four-fifths of the Polish people are Roman Catholic. All the other Churches in the country are relatively small. There are at least ten of them. If we hear of little inconvenience to them that is due not to their strength but to their weakness, and means that they can be brushed aside whenever the State so desires. But before their day comes they are useful as a make-weight against the strong Church of Rome and give the Polish authorities at least the possibility of saying that the freedom which the small Churches enjoy proves to the world that the Polish State is not against religion as such. Nevertheless in 1950 the acting Bishop of the Polish Lutheran Church,

who had held that office during all the war, was vetoed by the Government, when the Church appointed him Bishop.

When the Concordat of 1925 was broken, priests were arrested and there was some intimidation of believers. The press and the radio poured out a stream of propaganda, and some of the same administrative interference as already reported in Russia became common. If Sunday nominally was not interfered with no one dared to refuse the so-called voluntary work which was arranged for that day. Political Parties gathered by force into their anti-religious membership Roman Catholic believers, and a strict censorship was imposed on the Church and its utterances. The Church was heavily taxed, and if the taxes were not paid property was confiscated. Civil marriage was made compulsory, although until then it was unknown in Poland. In 1948 all the land became State property, and as the Roman Catholic Church had much land it lost a main source of its income, as did all religious foundations. The attack, however, was not entirely direct and open; for, though in the early days religious instruction was still given by the Church as of old and no law forbade this exercise, nevertheless Parents' Associations in many places passed resolutions demanding that the religious instruction of their children by the Church should cease. Many believing people who continued to send their children to schools run by the various religious Orders found themselves out of work and there was no one to defend them.

In 1950 it began to be rumoured that Church and State in Poland were discussing a new Concordat. This seemed hardly believable, and the Vatican denied knowledge of any such discussion. Yet the Polish State saw how it could use the Church in the political sphere, and the Church was beginning to see that to continue its just opposition would destroy what remained of its influence. In April 1950 the rumours proved to be true. A new Concordat in which Church and State both make concessions was published. The State asserts its respect for religious freedom, and in return the Bishops bind themselves to support Poland's claim to the territories on the West seized during the war. The State denies any intention to restrict further religious teaching in schools, and the Bishops promise to support the social revolution and to instruct priests to teach respect for the authority of the State. The State agrees to continue the Roman Catholic University of Lublin, and the Bishops accept the new principle that the authority of the Pope is limited to the spheres of faith, morals, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The State allows Church press and publications on a level

with other publications, says it will put no obstacles in the way of public worship, pilgrimages and processions, that religious Orders will work in complete freedom, and that the State will give grants to aid the Bishops and the Church institutions in their work; and the Bishops agree that in all matters outside faith, morals, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction they will accept the guidance of Polish *raison d'état*.

While this is a better arrangement than at one time seemed possible, there is no doubt that the Church is tied hand and foot to the political ambitions and claims of the Polish State. It is also quite clear that the Church has been given certain privileges in quite general and indefinite terms. Already there are statements that the State is not observing some of the items which it incorporated in the Concordat. The Concordat witnesses on the whole to the strength of the Polish Roman Catholic Church. Even in 1950 the Polish Government, having built a new institution, insisted on its being opened with prayer by a Roman Catholic Bishop. The trouble is that what suits Poland to-day may not suit her to-morrow, and the governing factor is the need of the State.

(v) Czechoslovakia

In general the developments in Czechoslovakia since the Communists seized power in February 1948 have followed the same pattern as elsewhere. Certain features, however, are peculiar to Czechoslovakia, or, at least, are more clearly illustrated there, and it may be best to concentrate on these in this Report.

The aims of the Communist State in dealing with Church affairs may be summed up as follows:—

1. To prevent the Church from being used, directly or indirectly, for the expression of anti-Communist views, and in particular to undermine the authority and political influence of the Roman Catholic Church. This was a short-term policy which formed part of the measures taken to secure power after the Revolution.
2. To encourage pro-Communist factions in the Churches, and to ensure that religious organisations would be subservient to the Communist State, and would be available as part of the propaganda machine for certain purposes. This is a long-term policy which recognises the Churches as a factor in public opinion, but which may be altered according to circumstances.

3. To replace religion by the Communist creed. This is the ultimate aim, which it is hoped will be achieved by universal education and propaganda, and by the creation of a new order of society in which religious beliefs will wither away. Any religious liberties which may be permitted are regarded by the Communists as an opportunist concession to a superstition which dies hard, but which gives less trouble if allowed to die quietly.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, we can trace the working out of this policy in a nation whose religious traditions have much in common with our own. There are historical differences which must not be left out of account; but looking at the Presbyterian Church of Czech Brethren in particular, we can see what happens to a living Church when Communism comes to power. It is as well to have in mind relevant questions which we expect to find answered in the course of our examination. It is not enough at this time of day to set out merely to prove that Communism is inconsistent with religious liberty as we understand it. Such an approach might easily blind us to dangers in our own situation, especially the danger that other forms of modern secularism, no less pervasive than Communism, are already threatening to undermine the basis of our religious liberties. The following questions are of practical interest because they can be applied directly to an examination of our own Church problems:—

(*a*) What changes does the pattern of Communism impose on the Church and its organisations?
(*b*) In what ways do faithful Christians, sincerely desiring to preserve their Christian witness and to maintain their Christian fellowship, react to these changes?
(*c*) To what extent and in what form does the living Church survive under Communism?

The Attack on the Political Power of Rome

According to the last census in 1930, 78·8 per cent of the people belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless this Church was weak and vulnerable. Membership was largely nominal, especially in the cities. The Vatican regarded Czechoslovakia as heretical and unreliable. There was a strong element of anti-clerical feeling in Czech nationalism. Before 1918, Roman Catholicism had been closely identified with the Hapsburg monarchy, with the result that a mass

movement ' away from Rome ' took place after the establishment of the Republic.

To regain popularity the Vatican had allowed a considerable degree of national independence. Many Czech Roman Catholics, while giving spiritual obedience to the Pope, did not follow the political leadership of the Vatican. During the German occupation there had been some notorious collaborationists in Slovakia (*e.g.*, Father Tiso), although other Roman Catholic priests had a good record of resistance to Nazi-ism, and Cardinal Beran himself had been in a concentration camp. The social welfare work of ' Caritas ' was on a broad basis and well organised. The Roman Catholic ' People's Party ' joined the coalition with Socialists and Communists after the Liberation, a remarkable compromise for Roman Catholics, since it involved the acceptance of the basic socialist programme and also of Czech-Soviet economic and cultural collaboration. In practice the People's Party was naturally more conservative and pro-Western than the other Parties, and came increasingly to play an opposition rôle. Roman Catholics showed more readiness than ever to co-operate with Protestants. The most notable instance of this co-operation was a peace demonstration (arranged following the visit of the Archbishop of York in 1947) in which representatives of all Churches took part with the Cardinal in the chair. Nevertheless Protestants remained suspicious of the political activities of the Roman Catholic Church. They could not forget that their religious freedom had been won from the Roman Catholic powers only after a bitter struggle and with the help of progressive forces in the State.

Measures taken by the Communist Government after the Revolution, which mainly affected the Roman Catholic Church, included:—

(*a*) The dissolution of the People's Party and action against leading Roman Catholic politicians.
(*b*) The taking over of Roman Catholic papers.
(*c*) A ban on the ' political misuse of the pulpit.'
(*d*) Land reforms which reduced to 150 acres the estates of the bishoprics.
(*e*) Nationalisation of social institutions and hospitals.
(*f*) Nationalisation of schools (accepted without much opposition by Protestants. Only the Slovak Lutheran Church had denominational schools).

In the struggle which later developed the main issues were the

participation of priests in political life and the excommunication by the Vatican of those who, like Father Plojhal, defied the Papal ban on active support of the Communist Party. Thus the Roman Catholic Church was adopting a new position of confining itself to spiritual activities (as was made plain by Cardinal Beran's pronouncements and by the Pastoral Letter read in the Churches on the first Sunday of Advent 1948), and thus accepting the non-political rôle which the new situation imposed. This attitude was approved by one at least of the Protestant leaders. It was the Communists who demanded that the Church should be more active in support of the new order. The Communist aim was not only to restrict the influence of the Church but to transform it into an instrument of Communist policy. To do this it was necessary to sever the link with Rome, to separate the hierarchy from the rank and file of the clergy and the people.

The extent to which this has been achieved is shown by a recent announcement that 1700 priests and 3 Bishops attended a ' peace demonstration ' under Communist auspices.

State Control and Direction of the Churches

Before the Revolution a Religious Department had been organised in the Communist Ministry of Information, and this was easily transformed into a Ministry of Religious Affairs. This Ministry can exercise its influence (*a*) by control of appointments, (*b*) by financial control, (*c*) by Trojan Horse methods of organisation from within, (*d*) by supervising theological training, and (*e*) by censorship or inspired articles in the religious press. In the Protestant Churches only (*b*) and (*c*) have so far proved a serious danger.

(*a*) It is a surprising fact that no minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has been deposed, and only one election to office seems to have been influenced by political considerations. The State had always reserved the right formally to confirm ministerial appointments, because ministers exercised certain civil functions in connection with the registration of baptisms and marriages. The new law makes this control stricter, and although in the judgment of Protestant Church leaders no new principle is involved, it is obviously liable to abuse. The difficulty of elections to the Synod, which also required approval, was overcome by forming a nominations committee which submitted a list to the authorities beforehand.

(*b*) More serious is the fact that salaries of ministers are now paid

by the State, instead of being supplemented by block grants to the Church as before. This change was opposed by the Church of Czech Brethren and the Slovak Lutheran Church, but their point of view could not be maintained in face of the readiness of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Czechoslovak Churches to accept State support in this form. The Roman Catholic Church had always enjoyed State support, and its members had no obligation to pay for religious services. It was not until 1861 that the State guaranteed some contribution to Protestant (Lutheran and Reformed) Churches, but the sum was not fixed and depended on the goodwill of the authorities. The Roman Catholic Church had of course accumulated a large amount of property, while the Protestant Churches, which came into existence with the Edict of Toleration in 1781, started with empty hands. The obligation to support their ministers turned out to the advantage of the Protestant Churches, whose members were thus trained in Christian liberality and independence. The Czechoslovak Republic took over the Austrian system of 'congrua' with some changes in the basis of payments, and a similar system was applied to all 'State-recognised' Churches. The Church of the Czech Brethren received block grants towards the salaries of clergy and also a contribution towards its central administration. It was realised that the Church was too dependent on State support and, during the war, when the German authorities threatened to reduce the grants, a successful campaign was launched which raised the proportion of Church contributions from one-half to two-thirds or three-quarters of the total budget. The Church was thus nearly self-supporting, but when prices trebled after the war the Church was again more dependent on State subsidies. The Roman Catholic Church, having lost its lands and not having any substantial income from voluntary contributions, was much more seriously hit; and the State decided to distribute State support equally among all the Churches, and to make itself directly responsible for the payment of salaries. It proved impossible to resist this apparently generous offer which was backed by a good deal of propaganda. At the same time a new regulation laid down that all the accounts of congregations and Church authorities must be submitted for approval. An assurance was given that ministers remained the servants of the Church and did not become State employees.

(*c*) We have seen how the Communists tried to create division in the Roman Catholic Church between the Bishops and a Communist-led faction which defies the authority of Rome. The Czechoslovak

Church, which arose in 1918 as a modernist and nationalist secession from the Roman Catholic Church, has from the beginning shown its eagerness to support Communist policies and, since its nominal membership of 800,000 is equal to that of the Czech Brethren and Slovak Churches combined, it has a powerful influence when backed by official propaganda and has frequently been used to counter any signs of reluctance in the other Churches. Its Pan-Slav policy links it with the Orthodox Church, a very small body which has been officially encouraged, with a new Patriarch from Russia who is always accompanied by a political adviser and director. It is a tribute to the leadership of the Protestant Churches that no signs of disruption have appeared in their organisation. Conferences of ministers have been summoned by the Ministry of Religious Affairs without reference to the Church headquarters. Courses of instruction in Marxism have been organised for ministers in presbyteries, and no doubt prove as interesting and impressive as other things that presbyters are compelled to listen to. On special occasions Communist officials appear as distinguished visitors and give propaganda addresses which sometimes sound very odd. It is difficult to say how much all this adds up to. But it suggests that at present the Communist State has the limited objective of ensuring that the Church will not oppose, but will rather support and lend its blessing to the new order, the fight against imperialism, and the peace campaign.

(*d*) Hitherto theological training has continued without any sign of being affected by Communist influence. This is confirmed by a recently published book containing lectures delivered at the Comenius Faculty in an extension course for laymen, which seems to have been remarkably well attended. Instruction in Marxism is given, but as it seems to be left in the hands of the theological staff, it may in practice be no more tendentious than a course in comparative religion. Students are more likely to be influenced through the youth organisations which they are compelled to join and which are free to carry on their activities in the colleges.

(*e*) The religious press is the easiest to control of all Church activities, yet in Czechoslovakia it is in fact the free-est. There was a strict censorship to begin with, and the Church papers are now printed by a nationalised firm. Yet there seems to be no paper restriction, and the small Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (with a membership of 350,000 souls) publishes regularly a weekly paper of four pages, a monthly magazine of twenty-four pages (illustrated), and a first-class

theological review edited by Professor J. L. Hromadka. The contents are almost entirely theological or homiletic, with a good deal of simple and practical exposition of the Bible. There are occasional articles which are obviously dictated or inspired by the State authorities—a front page article on the fight for peace, a protest against some resolution of the World Council of Churches on international affairs. References to the Far East, the rearmament of Germany, and the policy of the U.S.A. and other Western Powers often seem pro-Communist. But on some of these questions the sincere views of the writers, ill-informed and influenced by propaganda as they are, are known to coincide with the views of the Government. There is always a half-column in the weekly paper which gives a summary of the news of the world from the Communist angle, just as during the Nazi occupation it gave the Nazi version of the news. But these small signs of the times do not affect the soundness and faithfulness of Christian witness in this censored paper, and even the censors are confronted with the Gospel.

The Attitude of Christians to the Communist State

Has the Church sold itself to Communism? The Church has accepted a relationship with the State which is a compromise, as any agreement with the secular power must be. Anyone who knows the men concerned and the situation which faced them must feel that they have acted loyally and realistically, well aware of the dangers of Communist aims, and that they have maintained the witness of the Church in an unexpected way:—

(*a*) The essential life of the Church is still fundamentally Christian and independent of the State. The agreement with the State makes possible a degree of public witness in a Communist country which could not be lightly thrown away.

(*b*) The Czech Church leaders would maintain that the compromise has meant no sacrifice of the divine rights of the Church, but only of the legal privileges which the State had granted and could therefore withhold. The compromise, however, includes two consequences of the political situation which seriously affect the ecumenical life of the Church: separation from the Western Churches, and the fact that on social and international questions —*e.g.*, peace—Christian views are distorted. Even here, however, some Christian expression is possible, and the peace campaign might in a crisis become a form of passive resistance.

Religious Freedom and the Living Church

In an article some time ago J. L. Hromadka quoted the last verse of Acts, which expressed vividly his conception of religious freedom in the present situation. 'Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.' This New Testament conception of freedom does not depend upon legal or constitutional guarantees, but upon the vitality of the Church's spiritual life. It is important to remember, however, that the attitude of the Czech Protestant Church is not one of withdrawal or of mere 'spiritual freedom.' The Church also claims freedom to witness and freedom of political action, and it is in view of this fuller freedom that the Church seeks to witness in relation to the State, as Christ appeared before Pilate, and as Paul preached before Agrippa. Relations with the State always involve the danger of restrictions, and this is common to all Churches in a secular society. But the danger is less where the Church does not rely on its legal rights, its property, its popular support, and its influence with the Government of the day. In a revolutionary age these advantages can be swept away in an hour. The Church of the Czech Brethren has learned by experience that such statutory freedom is not normal in Church history, and this is its strength compared with the Roman Catholic and Czechoslovak Churches.

(vi) YUGO-SLAVIA

Yugo-Slavia is fairly equally divided between the Roman Catholic West and the Serbian Orthodox East, with a strong body of Moslems in the centre. The figures according to the last official census of 1931 are:—

Orthodox—7,616,000; Roman Catholics—5,841,000; Uniats—52,000; Protestants—338,500; Moslems—1,561,166; Jews—68,405.

Under the Constitution of 1945:—

(1) All citizens have equal rights irrespective of nationality, race, or creed.

(2) Citizens are guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.

(3) The Church is separate from the State. Religious institutions are free to conduct religious affairs and to administer religious ceremonies.

Notwithstanding these declarations of equality and freedom, the Government launched a bitter attack against the Roman Catholic Church immediately after the end of the war in 1945. The main reason for the attack was the fear of the Communists of a rival world-wide organisation; but their policy received enthusiastic support from partisans of the National Liberation Army on account of the attitude of prominent Catholic Bishops and priests during the German-Italian occupation. In fact the Roman Church had looked on the Communist-led partisans with suspicion from the start of the war in 1942, while the Orthodox Church, by tradition and feeling pro-Russian, found it easier to support a movement based on sympathy for Russia. This has important bearings on the present position of the Churches in Yugo-Slavia.

The end of the war then ushered in a Government-sponsored attack on the Roman Catholic Church. In September 1945 the Roman Catholic Bishops issued a brave Pastoral Letter, charging the Government with the execution and imprisonment of many priests, with the closing of Church schools and charitable institutions, and with the confiscation of Church lands. The letter went on to condemn the ' materialistic and godless spirit that is being spread openly and secretly in our country,' and to demand the return both of the freedoms denied to Christians and of all confiscated property. The Government identified this resistance with the person of Mgr. Stepinac, Primate of Croatia and Archbishop of Zagreb. He was later arrested, and in October 1946 sentenced to sixteen years' hard labour. When Tito became willing to release him on condition of his leaving the country, the Vatican announced in July 1951 that the Archbishop preferred to remain near his flock and the Holy See would not interfere with his conscience in this matter. In January this year Archbishop Stepinac was released on condition that he resided quietly in his native village. Tito's break with the Cominform in 1948 in no way relieved the Roman Catholics, and their figures of November 1950 put the number of executed priests as 228 and that of prisoners as 1726. The statement is also made that of 1916 parishes only 400 have parish priests.

Since its disestablishment in 1945 the Orthodox Church has led a precarious existence, impoverished by confiscations and hampered in

all activities, even village services being sometimes interrupted by Communist-controlled local councils bitterly hostile to the priest. The most recent blow is the abolition in February 1952 of the Faculties of Divinity in the Yugo-Slav Universities ' in the interests of the separation of Church and State.' Yet the Orthodox Church has not come under the same direct attack as the Roman Catholic Church, for the Government seeks to make use of it for its own purposes. In 1946 they welcomed back the aged Patriarch Gavrilo, who, as one of the prime movers in the anti-Nazi *coup d'état* in 1941, had been imprisoned in Dachau by the Germans. The return of this respected figure was exploited by the Government, and in December 1947 Gavrilo called on Orthodox believers to ' assist the State wherever it was in the National interest.' But Gavrilo was soon disillusioned, and Church-State relations again deteriorated. In March 1949 Yugo-Slavia followed Bulgaria in creating a Priests' Trade Union of renegade or unfrocked priests. A movement seemed to be afoot to isolate the Holy Synod from the rank and file priests by skilful propaganda. In the late spring of 1950 the Patriarch died, and on 1st July his successor Vikenty was elected. Under his guidance relations with the Government have improved, some vacant sees have been filled and limited permission to give religious instruction has been granted. The improvement is due in part to Vikenty, but more surely to the break with the Cominform and the slightly more liberal policy adopted by Tito in his effort to please American and Western European opinion.

An interesting view of the general situation was given in September 1951 by a delegation of eighteen representatives of the World Council of Churches. They reported good relations between the Holy Synod and the State Commission on Religious Affairs, full Churches in Belgrade, and no interference with the smaller Protestant groups. On the debit side their report spoke of desperately inadequate remuneration for priests, poor conditions, and a great shortage of Bibles, &c. The Bible Society recently restarted its work of supplying Christian literature, and in November 1951 an Orthodox delegation visited England. It is a matter of importance that the channels of Christian fellowship are thus being kept open.

C. CHINA

How Communism began in China

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were various revolutionary movements in China aiming at the overthrow of the feudal Manchu dynasty and the building of a new and modern China. The Revolution of 1911 creating the Chinese Republic was carried out under Sun Yat-sen and his Kuo-min-tang, or National People's Party.

The revolutionary task was a very different one from anything comparable that might have had to be undertaken in Britain. The most obvious difference is in the rate of change. China has been trying to do in fifty years what Britain has taken three hundred years to do. China maintained an impressive degree of democracy socially, but had little experience of it politically above the village level. Chinese society is to the extent of about 80 per cent agricultural and rural, while British is predominantly industrial and urban. The Chinese character sometimes resembles the bamboo which can bend low and long and then quickly spring upright again. The British like to think that their national character has the unyielding strength of the oak. It has to be remembered also that the extent of China's probably large mineral resources has even yet not been ascertained and that her industrial development is just beginning.

After about ten years the Kuo-min-tang found that the real control of the country had got into the hands of military and capitalist elements, and the more revolutionary section of the Party exercised power only in the south. Sun Yat-sen tried in vain to get the help of the Western Democracies, and then turned to Russia for help. Russia sent a group of civil and military advisers, including Borodin, who has been described as the ablest foreigner who has lived in China in the twentieth century. The result was a growth of Communist opinion in China, the frightening of the more conservative wing of the Kuo-min-tang, and the emergence of the Communists as a separate Party. They exercised power for a time in the south, but their terrorist excesses roused the country against them and they were driven by military force from the South of China into the North-West. They were not broken up, however, and retained control of an area of North-West China until the end of the war. Their clean and efficient administration of their territory helped to secure for them a more favourable public opinion through China generally.

From 1927 onwards there was civil war in China between the Kuo-min-tang under Chiang Kai-shek on the one side and the Communists on the other. Even during the war years—*i.e.*, between 1937 and 1945—this continued to smoulder while the Communists perfected their guerilla tactics in fighting the Japanese, often successfully. The Russian intervention for the last week or so of the war against Japan gave them control of Manchuria. Under their protection the Communists infiltrated into North Manchuria, which became the military base. When after a few months the Russians left Manchuria they handed over to the Chinese Communists what they themselves did not want of the arms and equipment of the Japanese army.

The Communist army gradually secured possession of North and Central Manchuria, and in the autumn of 1948 captured Moukden and South Manchuria. From there they rapidly advanced into North China, seizing from the Nationalist armies the arms and equipment lavishly provided by America. By the end of 1949 practically all the mainland of China had been occupied by the Communist armies, and Chiang Kai-shek and the remnant of his armies had taken refuge in Formosa, where they still are.

Why and How Communism Triumphed

No single reason for the Communist Party's success in this revolutionary movement outweighed all others. The following, however, must be considered as very important:—

(*a*) First must come the failure of the Kuo-min-tang under Chiang to prosecute tasks of national reconstruction with vigour and clear purpose; too many corrupt officials; the loss of the Party's initial revolutionary zeal; its failure to train people in democracy and to hand over power to an elected Government; failure of army morale from inefficient military leadership and unfair treatment generally; loss of faith in the Party by ordinary people as the civil war brought more and more misery, disorder, insecurity, and particularly inflation. Thus people were 'conditioned' to put some trust in Communist propaganda claims to champion the cause of the masses in the struggle for livelihood and security. At the last there was a fairly widespread tendency to think that Communist rule might bring its own difficulties, but that nothing could be worse than the existing régime. There was, in fact, no alternative with any hope of success in it.

(*b*) On the Communist side the possession of a disciplined, well-

trained and, in the latter stages, well-equipped army of high morale must be considered a primary reason for victory. Contributing to its morale were (i) fair treatment as regards food, clothing, and special privileges for dependants; (ii) indoctrination in Communist teaching giving soldiers an important place in the revolutionary movement and a sense of what they were fighting for. It should be noted then that Communism has gained power in China by its military superiority and that the Chinese people have been faced by the *fait accompli* of the victorious Communist minority.

(*c*) Behind this army stands the Chinese Communist Party—itself, a comparatively small minority group. This Party has been hardened and disciplined through the civil war period since 1927. Many of its leaders have spent years in Soviet Russia and are thoroughly indoctrinated and convinced Communists. There can be little doubt but that the zeal of these Chinese Communists with their faith in their cause and their willingness to suffer for it has been a vital factor in their success. This has to be considered along with other facts—fear of Party discipline, of word or action that might be construed as out of line with accepted Party thought, &c.—as a factor making for efficiency and comparative freedom from corruption.

(*d*) Then there is the moral strength in the C.C.P. derived from its sense of belonging to the revolutionary movement of world Communism. Chinese Communism achieved the leadership of the Chinese National Revolution by its own political and military power without material aid from the Soviet Union (so far as can be ascertained) other than that of taking over vast quantities of Japan's arms, but the Chinese type of Communism is ideologically the same as the Soviet Union's and uses the same techniques. There is, consequently, in China's Communism a strength derived from its being part of a wider revolutionary movement. There has been a great upsurge of Chinese nationalist feeling as a result of shedding all foreign controls, and the Communists secure the credit for giving China her proper standing among the nations. This is particularly true among youth.

(*e*) Not least among the reasons for the Communists' victory in China was their preparatory propaganda, continued, of course, since their coming to power. As elsewhere the Communists claim to be the champions of ' the people's ' rights against injustice, particularly the champions of the peasants and industrial workers against landlordism, victimisation by capitalists, and the corrupt practices of officials. It must be understood that by ' the people ' the Communists mean only

those who approve and actively support the Communist programme. Others are ' reactionaries ' and can have no claims to anything.

(*f*) The populace were ruthlessly terrorised into submission. Previous to May 1948 the Communist policy towards people under its control was one of terrorism. Multitudes fled before the Communists. A sudden change in this policy was made in May 1948 and was widely proclaimed. This had much influence in disposing people at least not to flee before the advance of Communism.

How Communism Maintains Itself

The first point to note here is that the Party was and still is the only ' power group ' in the country after the defeat of the Kuo-min-tang armies and their departure to Formosa. The Party controls the People's Liberation Army and the Security Police. Mao Tze-tung said on 1st July 1949: ' Reactionaries must be deprived of the right to voice their opinion. Only the people are allowed to have the right of voicing their opinion. The army, police, and courts of the State are instruments for classes to oppress classes. To the hostile classes the State apparatus is the instrument of oppression. It is violent, and not benevolent.'

Furthermore, because the Party is the accepted leader in the ' People's Republic,' which is nominally a coalition, the beliefs, ideology, policies, techniques put into operation are those of the C.C.P. There is no visible alternative. Newspapers, magazines, radio, cinema, theatre are active with constant, reiterated, effective propaganda. Everywhere pressure is exerted to enlist everyone, especially the young people, in active co-operation with the powers that be. Discussion is not free to go in whatever direction the facts may lead, but has the one object of convincing everybody that the Party Truth and Party Political Line is the only one. This applies also to discussion at the highest level of the People's Political Consultative Conference (P.P.C.C.), where discussion goes on until everyone has accepted the Government's proposals, under pressure if necessary. The same control and leadership is exercised on industrial and professional workers through labour unions and on peasants or farmers through farmers' unions. Criticism is allowed, and indeed sometimes encouraged, of Government and even Party officials for failure in zeal or efficiency, but no criticism is possible of the Party itself and its basic Truth and Policies.

A premium is thus put on ' orthodox ' action or thought. The true citizen of the ' New Democracy ' is one who unhesitatingly accepts the

P.P.C.C. leadership in all its implications, and those who show by their acts or thoughts that they are not true citizens are liable to be victims of the revolutionary struggle. This means punishment, imprisonment, re-education to correct faults or reactionary or feudal thinking. Reasonable estimates of the number killed since 1948 vary between half a million and two million. The Deputy Governor of the Province of Canton was recently quoted as publishing the figures for his region. In nine months, from October 1950 to August 1951, the number of counter-revolutionaries executed in the province was 28,322, an average of some three thousand a month. The policy pursued in the latter part of 1951 seems to have been one of liquidating all who were not considered to be assimilable. Ordinary citizens are being made to take an active part in this campaign of executions, in keeping with the theory that violent struggle is a Communist necessity. Participation also commits the participants to the Communist cause.

Fear is widespread—fear of saying something that will reveal the wrong kind of thoughts, fear of associating oneself by thought, word, or deed with any section of society already considered hostile or reactionary to the new régime; fear of being considered less enthusiastic than others in acclaiming the new liberators of the people; fear of being out of step in any way with what is the done thing; fear of the informer and fear of being placed in such a position that one must inform on others or be regarded as an enemy of the people. Fear is kept acute by dispossession of property, by bringing suspects before ' The People's Courts,' where no proper process of law is observed, or by holding accusation meetings where individuals are denounced for real or invented offences.

This involves what Westerners would consider hypocrisy, double-living and double-thinking, and sheer lying, but what to the Chinese is merely realistic expediency to survive in the present situation. Forced informing on relatives, friends, and neighbours is undermining all self-respect and is so demoralising people that they do not keep to what they know to be right or true. In consequence there is much making of false accusations by people who know that their accusations are false. No estimate is possible of the number of those who really support the C.C.P. Most observers say that the majority of Chinese dislike it intensely, a fact shown in the common use of the word ' they ' for the governing Party and officials.

On the other hand, the régime has maintained itself, and in the

beginning this was certainly so, by its appeal to all patriotic Chinese to join under its leadership in the tasks of national reconstruction and by the plain fact that no other political alternative to the discredited Kuo-min-tang rule was in sight. Co-operation with the inevitable was the only way, and many took it with some optimism. This appeal of the régime is still a strong factor in certain areas of China's life, particularly among Chinese youth, who see that under C.C.P. leadership China's international position has been immeasurably strengthened. She has an Army and Air Force that United Nations Forces have to reckon with. She has cast aside her semi-colonial status and dependence on Western countries, and has a hope of national rehabilitation. This nationalistic appeal to the youth of the country, now hearing only one side of the question and regularly attending indoctrination classes under Communist leadership, is one of the most powerful factors helping to maintain the Communist régime in China to-day. Whether it will continue to be so will depend on the C.C.P.'s ability to solve national problems in the development of industry and agriculture, and of the mineral resources of the country, to the betterment of the people's welfare. Above all, more food must be produced for the feeding of China's 500 million people, hence the emphasis on the urgency of Land Reform. Failure here with the now widespread understanding of the new régime's ruthlessness and inhumanity towards those who are guilty, or even only suspected, of independent thought would lessen the Party's strength. This factor is now in favour of the C.C.P., though it might well lead to an increase in terror, victimisation, and elimination of the so-called enemies of democracy.

The question is often asked: Are the people under Communist rule better off than before? So far as can be gathered from first-hand reports the answer is no. The Communist answer would probably be that they are only at the beginning of their revolution and some must suffer for the sake of the future. That the people are suffering is a present fact. Broadly speaking, the material standard of living is being kept up in the towns at the expense of the country. When human values, such as happiness, absence of fear, freedom, mutual trust, secure family life, are brought into account the answer is definitely no.

China's entry into the war in Korea coincided with an increase of hate propaganda against America. There was an outbreak of spy mania, resulting in increased arrests, trials, and executions. The atmosphere of fear, hate, uncertainty, and suspicion grew tenser. It was noticeable that in Communist propaganda hatred of America ranked

higher in importance than love and respect for Russia. The attack on Britain was based more on past than on present crimes.

How the Church Lives under Communism

There is no parliament in China, but a body called the People's Political Consultative Conference was brought together to hear the plans of the Government. It included five Protestant Christians and two Buddhists, chosen as such. In September 1949 this body approved of a Common Programme for the new Government. This Common Programme included a declaration of religious freedom. On paper it looks satisfactory, but in practice it is very limited. In most areas, for instance, it confines the activities of the Church to the formal Sunday services. Freedom does not include the free preaching of the Word in relation to current events and decisions, nor does it include the freedom of the Christian to criticise or oppose any course in relation to social or political action. Youth work is forbidden. In some cases non-religious pretexts are found for prohibiting the free movement of ministers among their people. Again, preaching to non-Christians is in many places forbidden, although an anti-religious motive for the prohibition is not acknowledged. Most important, religious freedom is limited to ' the people '—*i.e.*, those who support the Common Programme. It cannot be claimed by those accused of being ' imperialists ' or ' reactionaries '—*i.e.*, not in sympathy with the Communist aims and methods. Further, there is always freedom to attack religion, without any consideration of truth or fairness.

It should be noted in this connection that not only Christians but Mohammedans and Buddhists are treated with considerable subtlety. No attack is made on individuals on the ground of their faith or membership of a religious body. They may, however, be asked to give support to some project which would involve an indirect denial of their faith or hinder the work of their group, but they will be asked in such a way that any reluctance to help is made to appear to be purely political. Ministers may be forced to include passages of political propaganda in their sermons. When denunciation meetings are held leading Christians may be found denouncing other Christians, missionary or Chinese, but again for other than religious reasons. They may be accused of acting for foreign powers, of spying, of having been members of the Kuo-min-tang, of being ' feudal ' or ' imperialist ' or opposed to the interests of ' the people.' The Boxers in 1900 demanded the burning of incense

before an idol. The Japanese demanded bowing before an imperial shrine. The Communists are much more subtle and much more dangerous, for the Christian may not realise till too late that what he has done has in fact involved denial of his faith.

Another matter that is of vital concern is the Communist idea of truth. It has nothing to do with facts, or with objective truth or with any fundamental theological or philosophical ideas. ' Truth ' is what at the moment suits the Communist Party, just as a ' good ' man is a man who is supporting the Common Programme. There is no absolute standard of either truth or goodness.

The Church in present-day China has to encounter many more specific difficulties:—

(1) The ideology of Communism is based on dialectical materialism with its assured interpretation of history. Communism, while setting out to be a social system, does also have the validity of a faith. Christians by their very profession of their own faith in the living and redeeming God of history put themselves among those who hold other than the orthodox beliefs of the new democracy. They thus risk putting themselves among those who cannot be assimilated.

(2) The historic connection of Christianity with the West and, in particular, the fact that the majority of Protestant missionaries were Americans has made it easy to suspect Christians of being imperialists. That does not so much mean sympathy with Western political aims, which in the case of America were generally harmless enough, as sympathy with economic and especially cultural purposes. Y. T. Wu, Literature Secretary of the Chinese Y.M.C.A., is sympathetic to ' The new Government and is much used by them.' He has an article in the ' People's China ' of December 1951, from which some quotations are made: ' The first missionary, an Englishman, Robert Morrison, was concurrently a Vice-Consul and an employee of the East India Company. Letters home from the first American missionary, E. C. Bridgman, spoke of the importance of the political aspects of missionary work.' The article goes on to suggest that the real motive behind American missionary educational work in China was the desire to acquire ' the largest possible returns in moral, intellectual, and commercial influence. . . .' He quotes, ' Trade follows moral and spiritual domination far more inevitably than it follows the flag. . . . Sincere Christians and genuine friends of the Chinese people in America subscribed millions for what they believed to be charitable and missionary work in

China. But the rulers of America and their agents at home and abroad took advantage of this to buy the favour of the Chinese people and further their own designs. . . . After liberation patriotic Chinese Christians realised that if Christianity is to survive, the Chinese Church, which throughout its 144-year history had been permeated by imperialist influences, must be reformed.' For the time being the Chinese Church has to suffer from the odium attaching to its immediate origin.

To mitigate this odium Y. T. Wu in the summer of 1950 produced a Manifesto admitting the Church's past connection with Western imperialism but repudiating that connection for the future, and promising the support of the Chinese Christian Churches in advancing the Government programme. They were to teach people in the Churches about the evils wrought in China by imperialism, and especially American imperialism; self-support, self-propagation, and self-government of the Church were to be speeded up; self-criticism advocated everywhere, a better understanding of the nature of Christianity itself was to be sought, along with unity among denominations, cultivation of Chinese leadership, and an emphasis given on anti-imperialistic, anti-feudalistic, anti-bureaucratic-capitalist education. 'Reform' was to be the chief concern of the Church. This Manifesto was shown to the Premier and approved by him. Leading Christians were then induced to sign it and, later, Christians generally. It was claimed that by the winter of 1951, 277,000 Protestant Christians had signed.

Subsequently meetings were held at which Christians denounced various missionaries or well-known Chinese Christians, chiefly for actions favourable to imperialism. There was doubtless subtle pressure put on these men at the time, and the wording of the denunciations may not have been their own. Facile judgment is to be avoided by those who have never been subject to similar pressure, but it would appear that there was at this point a failure in Christian courage and love. The denunciations went on, and from whatever angle it is looked at, a serious blow was dealt at the Church. In the same way the Church's support has been enlisted in the 'aid-Korea, oppose-America' campaign. Apparently, however, the campaign of accusation meetings has not been fully satisfactory to the authorities and renewed efforts along this line are in prospect.

(3) The Church is in serious financial difficulties. Apart from the loss of foreign help it is also suffering from the impoverishment of many wealthy and generous Chinese Christians. In some cases also

the Church has been forbidden to take up collections or to pay its ministers, who are officially considered to be unproductive.

(4) The taking over of Christian schools and colleges by the State has hit the Church hard. Government schools are subject to political indoctrination. The new régime is all out to capture the whole of youth for its ideals and way of life. From their earliest days in the kindergarten on through school life, through factory or college they hear again and again from every angle the virtues of the new way of life and the wrongness of the old. They are kept so busy between work and study and organised recreation that they have no time or opportunity to be alone. They work together, study together, play together. They have no time or are too tired to think for themselves. The impact of the new teaching is constant, while the opportunities for Christian contacts and fellowship are limited. Recently there has been increasing severity towards reactionaries, including forced accusation, condemnation, and mass execution. The young people have been compelled to take an active part in all this. So far the Government does not seem to have made up its mind about its policy on the theological colleges, which are still at work.

Similarly the Church has lost the goodwill and the unrivalled evangelistic opportunities that came from its medical work.

(5) The Church was perhaps more intelligently interested than most groups in social and political problems, and was responsible for a very considerable amount of social work. It does not now know where it should take a stand on such questions and is dissuaded from maintaining any kind of social activity. Only the State can be capable of carrying on beneficent schemes.

(6) No youth work centering on the Church is allowed. Scouts, Guides, Clubs, Youth Fellowships, and so on are forbidden. It is going to be extremely difficult for Chinese Christians to bring up their children as Christians.

(7) Increasingly the Government is taking control of the Church and trying to use it for its own purposes. It is inevitable that a totalitarian Government should try to control and use such live and vigorous bodies as may survive its coming into power, and the Chinese Government is no exception. Ministers in some places are made to submit the manuscripts of their sermons for approval. Propagandist passages may be inserted and agents are there to see that these are not omitted or abbreviated. Church buildings are used, generally on Sundays, for public meetings or other Government functions. Church papers have

to carry a certain amount of Government material, and all they print must be in line with Government policy.

(8) Reporting on the thoughts and sayings of everyone with whom one has dealings is almost inescapable. This makes mutual confidence between friends among Churchmen almost impossible. The sense of fellowship between Christians was formerly very strong in China, but it is now suspect and exchange of confidence is dangerous. The trust on which alone friendship can exist is thus seriously threatened.

The latest available information suggests that the Churches are still able to hold ordinary services in the towns and cities. Country churches are not faring so well. Many of them have been closed down by local officials and the members have not had the courage to appeal to higher authority, and such appeals when made have proved practically useless. In some rural communities Christians have been intimidated, and cases of the burning of Bibles and hymnbooks have been reported. In many places Christian boys and girls have been subjected to various special difficulties in order to make their lot as uncomfortable as possible. In spite of this Christian youth fellowships in certain institutions have continued very active and have been an inspiration to older Christians.

What is the Attitude of Individual Christians to the New Régime?

As might be expected, there are wide variations in the attitude of individuals to Communism. They may be roughly divided into five classes:—

1. Those who look with approval on at least the social part of the Common Programme.

This position is held by a good number of the more thoughtful Christian leaders. These were Christians who had a bad conscience about the Church's service to the nation when challenged by the self-denying service of Communists and their loyalty to the cause they believed in. Many Christians saw here cause for genuine penitence and self-criticism before God, not in a meeting for the sake of Party approval. They hoped that in the task of reconstruction Christians could take a real share. They have seen the reforms carried out by the new régime and, although this has been effected with a ruthlessness whereby many innocent people have suffered, much has really been done to cast out former evils and eliminate public corruption. There must be distress of heart and disillusionment with many of them. They are no longer optimistic about the new revolutionary order, but

they still see in many of the tasks that face the nation—public health, communications, industry, and water conservancy—an opportunity of serving in humility, faith and obedience, in dependence on the living God. Such men and women are facing this situation with courage and faith, and they are counting on our prayers.

2. At the other end are those who see the new régime as the enemy of the Church and Christian freedom and, while carrying out the various requirements asked of them, are at heart unhappy about the Communist-led Government and the Communist-inspired policies. There has been no suggestion of open rebellion. They do what is required of them in a general way. The test comes or will come when they are faced with a personal decision to do something that they see clearly is not in accordance with their Christian conscience. Many of them will stand and be outspoken and take the consequences. Such Christians are in all Churches and not least among the most indigenous groups that have had least to do with missionary societies. It was one of these who is quoted in an account of a meeting at which four Church representatives were reporting on the conference called by the Government in April 1951 at Peking. The first three speakers were very enthusiastic in praise of the complete Government programme. The fourth, however, said that he was sorry that he had to contradict the previous speakers. That was not the impression he had gathered from the conference. He had listened for many days, hearing very many voices, but one voice he had missed and that was the voice of God.

3. Those who are fearful.

Those people, with traditional Chinese realism or wisdom or what Westerners often feel is compromise, bend to the blast, like the bamboo, and wait for another day when the wind will not be so strong. In their hearts they believe in Christ, but are afraid to proclaim their allegiance lest they or their family suffer. They shun church attendance or any outward church connection for themselves or their children. They know that there is discrimination against Christian children in entering schools or colleges and in getting positions in Government service or in business. And so they keep quiet.

4. Those who have unintentionally let themselves get into the power of the authorities.

It is mainly people in this group who have been forced to accuse others within the Church and who are pushing the movement for ' reform ' within the Church. Their task is to root out ' imperialist ' influence supposed to be hiding in the heads of Christians, in Christian

literature, hymns, and methods of work in Church organisations. The underlying purpose is to get rid of missionary methods and to substitute indigenous methods more in line with the desires of the new leaders of the nation.

5. Those who have renounced Christ.

Some have denied their faith, some even of the former leaders of the Christian movement. They have stated that they now recognise that they were previously deceived and misled. Now they see clearly that all religion is superstition and that there is no God. Fear or the desire for advantage has been stronger than such faith as they had. It may never have been very fully apprehended.

II

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

THE material gathered in the Survey given in the previous chapter affords emphatic confirmation of certain features of Communism already noted in last year's Report. There is still, unfortunately, in some quarters throughout the Church a failure to realise the full significance of the challenge of Communism and its direct and pressing relevance to the life and work of the Christian Church. There are those who seem to imagine that, because the Communist Party has no official representative in the House of Commons, or because it has ceased temporarily to exercise any overt aggressive tactics in some areas, Communism is a more or less spent force and need not further concern the Church in this country. That is a delusion. Any student of its strategy is aware that Communism knows how, when, and where to withdraw as well as how, when, and where to advance. The leaders of Communism are not asleep. A reading of the above Survey—and it is only lack of space and not of material that prevents its being much longer—cannot fail to convince one that Communism is still the most vital and aggressive force in world affairs to-day, that it is aflame with a fervent and indefatigable faith in itself as the one way of salvation for mankind, and that its goal is nothing less than world domination.

1. This faith, false as it may be, has caught fire in millions of hearts across the world and, backed by a ruthless strategy, is changing not only the social structure but the ways of life and of thought of whole nations and races. Communism is out to rewrite history. The facts recorded in Chapter I. bear conclusive witness that this is no mere political movement. Its radical character is evinced in its well-planned methods of what it calls 're-education,' by which it seeks to change the very mentality and habits of life of its subject peoples. The above Survey shows how it is the deliberate purpose of Communism to uproot Christianity and any system of ethics based on supernatural sanctions. This policy of exterminating belief in God and Christian moral values is intrinsic to Communism and shows that in the challenge of Communism the Church is face to face with a spiritual conflict. The fact

that the early glow of faith in Communism as a great ideal often deteriorates into a passion of hate and aggression and that many are bitterly disillusioned by their experience of Communism in action only serves to show more convincingly the spiritual character of the menace now threatening mankind. Of the most acute concern to the whole Christian Church is it that millions in Eastern Asia are being intensively indoctrinated in a materialist and atheistic creed. For Communism realises fully that its doctrine is integral to its political and economic policy. It is not accidental but essential that it should try to destroy Christianity and the Church. It is under no misapprehension that Communism and Christianity are in any way reconcilable. A policy of expediency, showing in certain quarters a seemingly conciliatory attitude towards the Church, in no way minimises this fundamental hostility.

2. This means that the weapons of this warfare must be more than are usually comprised in ' Rearmament.' The West hopes by such a policy to attain a military strength that will contain Communism and minimise the threat of a Third World War. But there is a tendency, growing with the increase in armaments, to rely on Western rearmament as sufficient and a failure to grasp the deeper moral nature of the challenge of Communism. Strange as it may seem in a movement which officially discards Christian moral values, Communism relies in its propaganda—especially, at present, in the Far East—on slogans denouncing the moral failings of the West, including exploitation and imperialism, and on its own non-military purpose to provide national independence, to better the conditions of the workers, to divide out the land to the peasants, and to establish world-peace. These promises, baseless as they may be in actuality, are nevertheless powerful factors in winning the enthusiastic support of millions of young people eager to respond to a moral ideal and of many embittered by grievances.

As against these hollow promises—largely a façade for a ruthless lust for power—Marshall Aid and the Colombo Plan were economic and political measures that had a moral purpose and a moral appeal. Yet the impact of these failed to reach millions of workers in Italy and France, so that a quarter of the electorate there still vote Communist, writers and scientists are still being duped, and millions of youth in Europe still march under a red flag in support of peace. It is the duty of the Christian Church to proclaim the supremacy of moral values and aims in international policy and to call for and support the expression of these in political and economic measures, especially in regard

to the underdeveloped parts of the world. Though military security is undoubtedly an immediate necessity, the nature of the challenge, the conditions in backward lands, and the confusion and unrest in the West itself, all demand the recovery of the primacy of moral purpose in international policy.

3. The Survey also shows the importance of the problem of Church and State, a very old problem but one thrown up afresh with an acuteness and tragedy perhaps unprecedented. The Church's relation to the civic power is for millions of Christian people in Eastern Europe and in the Far East no theoretical problem, but one involving mental agony, physical suffering, and often death. We in the Church of Scotland think we have found the solution of this long-contested struggle, but that concordat has never been tested, and it is well that we should give serious consideration to the situation of Christian brethren in Communist-dominated lands. Every Church member is also a citizen, and the tragic situation in some lands to-day may well indicate that the tacit assumption that the two terms, Churchmanship and citizenship, are largely coterminous, is not always justified. It may be that the Church's witness is not distinctively Christian enough to challenge the pagan elements of a State or a civilisation that is astray from God.

4. The impact of Communism on the Christian Church in various parts of the world demands of us the facing of certain radical and searching questions. Among these is the problem of the Church's own adequacy to meet the challenge of Communism. One thing we are inclined to overlook is that in facing this challenge the Church must not only make pronouncements and take action on certain public issues but must put her own house in order. The Church's adequacy depends primarily on its grasp of the Christian Gospel, of what is the Word of God for our time. Does it know what precisely that Word is and is it able to speak it? Besides, is the Church making the fullest and most effective use of its resources, especially of its man-power among the laity. Not a few in the Church, both ministers and members, require to be reminded that the Church is Catholic both in its nature and in its mission. The whole body of believers, be it in China or in Scotland, is one body, and what concerns the faithful in one place concerns all the faithful the world over. To deny this Catholic responsibility is to betray the Church. Culpable ignorance and slothful indifference are among the most prolific breeding grounds of Communistic propaganda. A Church membership that is not alive to the tremendous

challenge and opportunity of our time is going far to validate Marx's dictum that ' Religion is the opiate of the people.' The fundamentals of the Christian Faith and the rapier thrust of its Ethic are not sufficiently known and held with conviction and courage. Church membership for too many costs little or nothing, in any sense of the word. That is why the burning passion and the self-abandon of the young Communist are so often a stinging rebuke to the lack of vision and the self-complacency and stagnancy of many within the Church.

5. But ere we look more closely at one or two of the features of the problem, thrown into prominence in our Survey, let us consider a matter that exercises the minds of many—the precise nature of the challenge as it affects this country. Is there any possibility of the Communist Party gaining ascendancy in Britain? What exactly is the nature of the problem with which Communism confronts us?

A. THE THREAT TO BRITAIN

How Communism Gains Power

In order to answer this question some brief recapitulation of the methods by which Communism comes to power, given in last year's Report, will be useful. There are four elements which would seem to enter into the situation wherever Communism has achieved power:—

(*a*) The first is the internal collapse of the political and social order which preceded the Communist seizure of power.

(*b*) There is the use of physical force on the part of the Communists, or at any rate the quite explicit threat of it.

The presence of these two factors tends to vary inversely the one to the other. At the one extreme there is the case of the Baltic Republics which were simply occupied and absorbed into the U.S.S.R. by sheer military force. At the other extreme there is Lenin's seizure of power in Russia itself in 1917. He succeeded because of the almost total collapse of both the Tsarist régime and of the forces which led to the first Revolution. In consequence, in the first instance at any rate, he made a quite negligible use of physical force, which he hardly had at his command in any case. As may be seen from the account given in Chapter I. the case of China falls somewhere between these two extremes. The Communist armies played a decisive rôle in the seizure of power, but a part which they would have been quite impotent to play apart

from the political and moral collapse of the Kuo-min-tang Government and of traditional Chinese society under the impact of the West.

(*c*) The third element is the ability of the Communist movement to exploit popular feeling. For this purpose almost anything will do. The feelings in question need have no relation to Marxist ideology, so long as they are sufficiently deeply rooted to form the emotional basis for revolt. In Russia itself it was the cry for peace and land for the peasants. In China it was land, clean government, and national dignity to which appeal was made. Economic and social grievances, nationalist feeling, and weariness of war are all suitable as sources of emotional energy for the elevation to power of the Party. It is important to stress that it is what people feel that matters in this regard. Whether as a matter of objective fact their grievances are well founded, whether the order against which their indignation is directed is in fact responsible for their misery, or whether in fact it is doing all that is humanly possible for its alleviation, whether in fact the order which is offered for their allegiance is capable of doing any better, or whether it intends quite deliberately to depress their standard of living in order to further its own economic purposes, all this is of no account, provided their emotional attitudes can be exploited to further the designs of the Stalinists.

(*d*) The last element is the Communist élite, which controls the whole situation. It is the essential element in the whole scheme. It organises and controls what factors of physical force are available. It works upon such elements of discontent as may be exploited to serve the purposes of the movement. It provides the leadership for the organisation of revolt and the seizure of power. It is important to note it is composed essentially of ' intellectuals.' These may well be the sons of manual labourers, they may be devoid of much formal education, and they may in fact earn their living by means of manual work, though in fact influential Communists rarely have either this social origin or this type of upbringing and education. The essential point, however, is this: Communism is essentially action, shaped and controlled by theory. Its leaders, therefore, must be people capable of acting in terms of a theoretical understanding of history. No doubt where it has achieved power it shows a marked tendency to degenerate into a system of sheer power politics and expediency. It is however a great mistake to suppose that this corruption has by now become complete. It would be a far less serious menace to the well-being of the world to-day were this true. Possibly the single greatest source of

strength of the Communist movement is that it offers an expression to the aspirations of the young ' intellectuals,' particularly in the underdeveloped parts of the world. It offers a theory in terms of which the world may be understood and decisive action for the righting of its wrongs undertaken. The abuses and injustices of the past are to be swept away, scientific knowledge is to be used to the full for the enrichment of human life, and the control of this whole process is to be in the hands of the young ' disinherited intellectuals ' themselves. It is a most alluring prospect.

The Nature of the Communist Threat to Britain and its Churches

It will be evident that so long as anything approaching present conditions are maintained the chances of the Communist Party achieving power in this country are meagre. Force cannot be used except at the cost of a world war. The British social and political structure has stood up to two world wars and a vast process of internal change with no loss of cohesion and stability. It remains probably the toughest political organism in the world to-day. In this connection toughness may be held to be proportionate inversely to the amount of force necessary to maintain order in a situation of tension. Grievances undoubtedly exist, but the democratic machine has proved itself capable of effecting such changes as the mass of the people really desired. What is even more important, there is no possibility of the blend of economic grievance and injured national feeling, which is the most potent explosive in the Communist's political armoury, being available for use here. Attempts to work up anti-American feeling show how much importance Communists attach to this specific. Britain has its ' uprooted intellectuals,' who exhibit the affection for Marxist ways of thought characteristic of their kind, but they are not sufficiently numerous to have any very decisive influence. It need cause no surprise that the normal fate of any Communist who seeks election to Parliament is the loss of his deposit. But it would be a profound mistake to suppose that these facts imply that Communism constitutes no problem for this country and for its Churches. On the contrary, for this country it is probably the gravest political problem it has ever had to deal with, and for the Church the only comparable event would be the rise of Islam in the seventh century. There are three possibilities which give ground for concern. Here we leave aside the question of a world war,

which well might change the whole world situation in ways which it is quite impossible to predict:—

(*a*) In the first place, there is the threat of a drastic reduction in the standard of living of people in this country. Were this severe it might well increase the disruptive effect of the Communist Party very markedly. It is even conceivable that Communists might exploit industrial unrest to a point at which the Government of the day would be compelled to take measures which would seriously qualify democratic liberties as we understand them at present. But the social structure of this country being what it is, Communism is not likely to come to power except as the result of a military defeat at the hands of the Soviet Union.

(*b*) The more important possibilities are likely to develop slowly over a long period of time. Communist Governments now control some 800 million of people—one-third of the world's population—and the greater part of its largest land mass. This area is enormously rich in undeveloped natural resources, and contains a population which is increasing fairly rapidly. On the assumption that the Soviet régime contrives to maintain itself in power, and continues to exploit its natural resources at the rate at which it has been able to do over the past twenty-five years, it is clear that within a quarter of a century the power at the disposal of the Communist part of the world may well be vastly increased, relative to that at the disposal of the other nations. This of course may not happen, but it is wise to think in terms of its happening. As has already been argued, in this country the conditions are lacking for Communism gaining power, but over vast areas of the world this is not so. In many places all the conditions exist save one. There is at present no chance of Communists exercising that physical force which is a necessary feature of their seizure of power. It is in this regard that a marked increase in the might of the Communist world is particularly to be feared. Not only would its prestige be greatly increased, but it would become progressively more difficult to prevent the use of this so vital element in Communist strategy, in the vast under-developed regions of the world. Were these regions as a whole to come under Communist domination the position of the non-Communist world might well become hopeless. The task of the non-Communist world is so to raise living standards in its under-developed areas that the discontents which the Communist Party exploits as a means to power are removed before the change in the present power relations makes the direct use of force possible. Quite apart from this

particular aspect of it, a numerically more menacing and industrially more powerful Communist world in itself creates a most grave problem. To many minds sheer power is a most convincing argument.

(*c*) The previous point concerned the State directly and the Church indirectly. This one concerns the State indirectly and the Church directly. Since its beginning the Church has been quite familiar with two kinds of open and conscientious opposition. On the one hand there are other religions, alternative faiths. These have been strong in that they have appealed to powerful forces deeply rooted in human nature. They have been weak in that most of them have been more vulnerable to rational criticism than is Christianity. On the other hand there have been the various brands of secularism which have been strong in that they have appealed to rational criticism, and have appeared to rest content with what can be known with some reasonable degree of certainty, but have been weak in that they have lacked the deep emotional appeal of the religions. Their attitude has been mostly the negative one of rejection and questioning rather than of affirmation. The significance of Communism lies in the fact that it combines within itself both sources of strength. It purports to be scientific and operates with secularist categories of thought, but at the same time it is a fanatical atheistic religion which has shown itself capable of appealing to the emotional deeps of human nature. But to be understood properly this fact must be linked with another. This fanatical atheistic religion has incarnated itself in a vast structure of power. It can therefore propagate itself not only by means of its appeal to men but also by means of force and of the prestige which the possession of force always carries with it. As will be evident from a study of Chapter I., this movement is committed to the destruction of the Christian Church. It is important not to be deceived by the fact that for reasons of expediency it generally goes about this work in an indirect manner, and that where it conceives it to be worth while it even makes use of the Church for its own purposes.

These facts imply that the World Church faces a challenge of vast magnitude, a challenge which the Church in Britain cannot escape. It is true that the Church in this country is at present protected from some of the aspects of this challenge, but even this is an exemption which may well diminish as time goes on. It remains true, however, that the currents of thought and feeling from which Communism takes rise are to be found here, though perhaps not in so marked a degree as elsewhere. But the point of greatest importance is this: If it be

true that for some considerable time we in this country are to be exempt from some of the grimmer aspects of the threat which confronts so many of our brethren in other parts of the world, this fact serves only to impose upon us a greater obligation. This opportunity which has been given us must be used to discover solutions to the problems which confront the world, and to deepen and strengthen the life of the Church so that it may make its proper contribution.

B. THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE UNDER-DEVELOPED PARTS OF THE WORLD

It was pointed out in the preceding section of this chapter that the Communist Party gains power by working upon the discontents of the population. This discontent is entirely justified in areas of the world such as Asia and Africa. The basic factor in their discontent is sheer hunger. The impact of the Western world in general and of Christianity in particular has broken down the traditional order of society in those areas, and has released the hope of better things. The response is a form of nationalism which often seems strident and immature. But it should never be forgotten that the driving power behind this movement is a sheer poverty, which produces an appalling toll of human misery and suffering. In this situation nationalism plays a dual rôle. Sometimes it is artificially stimulated by privileged groups to distract the attention of the masses of the people from the economic ills which they suffer—as in Egypt and Persia. In other cases it coalesces easily with Communism—as in China. But in both cases Communism is a dominating factor in the situation.

The reality of this need and its magnitude may be grasped by considering some facts. It has been calculated that on the average each inhabitant of Britain requires three acres of agricultural land to produce the food which he eats, while each citizen of the U.S.A. requires for this purpose four acres. The average acreage available for all the inhabitants of this globe is about one and a half per person. When it is remembered that peoples of the Anglo-Saxon world, and to a somewhat lesser extent the peoples of Western Europe, consume a far higher average amount of food than this, the appalling extent of the need becomes obvious. It has been calculated that in Asia some 90 per cent of the people are under-nourished.

To meet this need there is required an enormous effort for the

improvement of agriculture in the under-developed parts of the world. The pressing need is for the production of more food. But this improvement in agriculture requires a considerable measure of industrialisation and an enormous development in education. Schemes for irrigation, and hydro-electric development, the opening up of new means of transport, the further exploitation of natural resources in order to help pay for capital equipment which must be imported, as well as to provide the amenities of life for the people of the country are all needed. Large numbers of people must be trained as technicians, teachers, doctors, and agricultural experts in order that these schemes may be efficiently operated once they are instituted.

In all these regards it is obvious that these lands urgently need the help of the West. Without assistance in the form of capital goods, and technicians of various kinds, the development cannot take place. The Colombo Plan represents a hopeful beginning in this work. But if the need is to be met it must be tackled on a far vaster scale. The urgency of this question is beyond dispute, but it would be foolish to minimise the enormous difficulties which attend any attempt to solve it.

Problems affecting the Under-developed Countries

(*a*) In the first place there are the inherent difficulties of the enterprise. Very difficult technical problems have to be met. Perhaps even more difficult is the problem of overcoming superstition and age-old customs, and training in modern techniques a population whose way of life has not changed for thousands of years.

(*b*) But the problems which will have to be met are not merely of an economic and technical character. As the project succeeds it will give rise to immense perplexities. To see something of their range and intensity it is only necessary to consider the effects which the Industrial Revolution has had upon the life and culture of Europe. There are three particular possibilities which it is relevant to mention:—

(i) Though ultimately the raising of the standard of living in these parts of the world is a necessary step in order to prevent them succumbing to the lure of Communism, the initial stages in this endeavour may well render them more liable to Communist influence. So far at any rate Communism has never gained power in extensively industrialised countries. On the contrary the conditions for its success are to be found only in partially industrialised countries. Marx rightly saw that the conditions for the Revolution to which he looked forward were

wealth, increasingly held in fewer and fewer hands and increasing poverty for more and more people. This he supposed to be the inevitable result of capitalist development. Whether or not it is properly to be described as capitalist, the development of the major industrial nations has not followed this line at all. Wealth is increasingly more evenly divided. Modern industrial development leads to the rise of a numerically large 'new middle class,' as it has been called, while Marx's 'industrial proletariat' tend to remain a relatively fixed proportion of the working population. In the U.S.A. it is calculated that the proportion has not increased since the eighties of the last century. In the future the signs are that it may even diminish relatively. In these circumstances the mass of the industrial workers have come to accept the position of being a very influential factor in a complex community, in which the distribution of wealth and of power is sufficiently widespread to make the Marxist conceptions of class war and the revolutionary seizure of power simply irrelevant.

But where industry is being started in a backward country conditions may well be such as to give a foothold to Communist attempts to seize power. In these countries something like the situation envisaged by Marx does exist. Great wealth and great poverty exist side by side. Because of their lack of skill workers are necessarily badly paid, while the same fact makes difficult the introduction of any considerable degree of mechanisation. At the same time the pre-existing order of society is seriously disrupted. The younger section of the population being in revolt against the past, and filled with exaggerated notions of the benefits which the application of science to the production of wealth can give, tend to be very impatient with the slowness of progress towards the desired goal. In such situations if for one reason or another things go particularly badly, and if there is an opportunity to organise some kind of violence against the existing Government, the Communists have their chance.

(ii) One of the most alarming features of the contemporary situation is the existence of a particularly heady form of nationalism all over the world. It may be that as a greater measure of economic prosperity is achieved this will diminish. But there is no necessary reason why this should be so. The sense of power which will come with a greater industrial potential may well increase nationalist feeling and lead it into imperialist aspirations. This is particularly likely to happen where, for the sake of strengthening national cohesion and morale during the difficult transition period, Governments have artificially

stimulated extreme nationalist feeling, and where there is a strong economic compulsion towards an expansionist policy. The instance of Japan is sufficient to demonstrate the horrors which may result from the industrialising of the whole world.

(iii) The impact of the Industrial Revolution upon European life has in places been sufficiently devastating, and this upon a culture everywhere to some extent influenced by the Christian tradition. It is highly likely that cultures which have not been moulded by this influence, except in some very small degree, will suffer even more gravely. Indeed it is obvious that some have already done so, even to the extent of total destruction. Recent history has illustrated the terrifying possibilities which lie in human nature once it is released from the restraints of traditional culture, limited as these may be in their effect. The prospect of this uprush of primitive savagery becoming even more widespread and having at its disposal the technical resources of the modern world is a terrifying one.

Problems affecting the West

(*c*) The problems mentioned so far have related to the internal situations of the under-developed lands. The two questions now to be dealt with have regard rather to the situation of the Western countries which alone are in a position to provide the capital resources necessary for carrying out such a programme. The first is this. Such a programme cannot be carried out except at the cost of very considerable sacrifice by the countries providing the capital. Unlike the capital investment which has been a feature of past years it cannot hope for a quick return. The wealth created must be made available for the development of the lands in which it has been produced, it cannot be returned to the investing countries in the form of handsome dividends. The effect which this policy of long-term investment will have upon the standard of living of the countries making it cannot be limited to those sections of the population which in the past have generally been responsible for such foreign investment as was made. It will inevitably touch the standard of living of the whole population, and will do this even more markedly in those countries where some advance has already been made towards equalising of wealth. Such a policy will therefore inevitably tend to be unpopular. And this is especially true when particular measures undertaken to forward it are unsuccessful, or when it is productive of undesirable results. Because the burden which

it imposes will fall upon the whole population it will be impossible to support it by appeals to the poor against the rich, or anything of that sort. Indeed it is possible that its greatest difficulty will be to find support among the mass of the population.

(*d*) This difficulty to which reference has just been made is greatly accentuated by the fact that this programme of help for the poorer regions of the world must be carried out in a context of rearmament, and indeed of the maintenance of a very considerable level of armaments for the whole foreseeable future. There is nothing more foolish than the dispute between those who favour rearmament and those who are conscious of the need of a programme of economic development in Asia and Africa. Both are necessary, and neither is of avail without the other. Communism cannot be defeated by military might alone, though military might forms an indispensable part of any effective resistance to it. On the other hand, an extensive and vigorous programme of economic amelioration carried out apart from the protection given by military might would create the conditions most calculated to lead to a world war, in the circumstances most likely to result in a victory for Communism. It would create this situation because it would constitute a most serious challenge to the whole Communist programme. On the one hand the possibility of a significant rise in living standards, where at present they are low, would destroy in the long run the Communists' chances of securing control of these territories. At the same time it would make it more difficult for them to convince those already under their control that Communism is the world's salvation. On the other hand such measures might initially improve the Communists' prospects. In these circumstances the temptation to take control, at any rate of the more accessible territories, before their condition improved so significantly as to lose them finally to the Communist cause might well prove decisive. An obvious case of this policy in action is the relation of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia to the creation of the Marshall Plan. Such a policy could not be tolerated indefinitely by the non-Communist world, which sooner or later would be forced into war in a relatively unprepared state. Furthermore, for reasons which have already been given, it is highly desirable that a preponderance of military power should remain in the hands of the relatively mature Western democracies as the industrial potential of the non-European world increases.

These very great difficulties have been outlined because it is important that they should be recognised, and that all who advocate programmes

of economic amelioration should fully understand the immensity of the demand which they are making. But despite the difficulties and dangers with which it abounds this programme remains a vital necessity. It is one of the cases where justice and expediency coincide. Though initially it may demand considerable sacrifices on the part of the Western nations, in the long run it will be to their advantage. To raise the standards of the more backward peoples is the only method of providing markets for the industries of the more advanced countries. Justice demands that the non-European population of the world should not be excluded from the advantages which the application of scientific knowledge to the problems of the material basis of life brings. The process of industrial advance has made use of the relatively backward areas of the world both as markets and as the source of raw materials. In certain regards this has been of great advantage to these peoples, but in the process their traditional way of life has been upset. Those who have profited most materially from this transaction have a duty to help those whose lands and materials they have used (*a*) to derive the fullest possible benefit from the resources which their territories hold, and (*b*) to achieve the material basis for a better way of life than the one which the impact of the West has destroyed.

This task is one which should be of particular concern to the Church. The very fact that it is a demand which justice makes upon the people of this country, along with others, that it is in fact the repayment of a debt, morally if not legally, should be sufficient to bring it widespread and vigorous support from all Christian people. Furthermore it is a matter which vitally affects the life and the well-being of those who are members of the younger Churches. But there are additional grounds why it is vital that it should receive the support of Church people in this country. As has been argued above, it is not a programme of action which is likely to receive enthusiastic support universally. The interests of too many people will be affected. The luxuries, and even the necessities, of daily life, not only petrol and tyres, but coffee, tea, soap, and margarine may cost more. Moreover it is very liable to encounter so many difficulties and in detail to be exposed to so much apparently justified criticism that people will very easily become wearied of it and dismiss it as an endeavour, no doubt in principle excellent, but incapable of achievement in practice. It is therefore the more important that it should have the unwearied and continued support of the Church and all its members. But the carrying out of this programme will also impose another obligation on the Church. The

changes consequent on the raising of living standards will greatly intensify the cultural and intellectual upheaval which already is going on all over the world. There is therefore a renewed demand on the Church to meet this situation by its activity of preaching the Gospel to every creature. This means not only a great increase in what is called missionary work, the work of aiding the younger Churches in their task, but it will also call for a response on the part of Christians to the many spheres of service in industry and education and in other aspects of the life of the community which any large-scale effort after amelioration of economic conditions in Asia and Africa will open up.

C. CHURCH AND STATE

The rise to power of Communism presents once more, in a peculiarly acute form, the perennial problem of the relations between Church and State. Communism is not only a non-Christian force, it is a fanatical atheistic religion. Therefore the relation between Church and State in Communist-controlled countries cannot fail to represent the problem in its most incisive form.

The Two Kinds of Freedom

The Church has always stood for religious freedom, but in making this claim it has at different periods meant two radically different things. To-day when they speak of religious freedom most British Protestants conceive of it in individualistic terms. They mean the right of every human being to come to his own opinions on ultimate questions and to join with others of a like mind in giving expression to their beliefs in worship, peaceful persuasion of others, and the prosecution of such good works as may commend themselves to their consciences, provided always that such activities do not interfere unduly with the rights of others, or disrupt the life of the community. This conception of religious freedom is a very modern development and, in any measure of fullness, has existed only within what are now called the Western nations during the last one hundred and fifty years. But for the greater part of the history of the Church such a view would have been quite foreign to the outlook of the vast majority of Christians. This other and traditional view has been admirably stated by Professor Butterfield in his recently published lectures, *Christianity in European*

History, pp. 33, 34: 'Against the pagan Roman Empire the original Christians had to assert what we might call the claims of conscience, at any rate in a certain sense. They insisted at any rate upon the right to worship the true God in the way that He had prescribed and to worship Him exclusively, even if this should entail a conflict with the claims of the group or the society to which they belonged. No sooner had they acquired power in their turn, however, than they resorted to the persecution both of pagans and of heretics. They did not admit that men had the right to worship false gods, or that it could be a matter of conscience to adhere to heresy. The exclusiveness of their claim was greatly embarrassed as a result of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, when Christians became divided on what were regarded as the essentials of the faith. . . . In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many branches of Christianity made the claim for freedom of conscience while they fought as a persecuted minority. Almost universally, however, they refused to respect the principle when in their turn they acquired the power to persecute. With extraordinarily few exceptions those Churches which are free from reproach in this matter are ones which never escaped from a minority position, or ones which arose after the year 1700 and were never in a position to resort to the policy or confront the real temptation.' This notion of freedom is freedom for a particular Church to promote its cause; the State giving it what aid it feels in the circumstances to be desirable. From this point of view only the truth, or what is taken as such, has rights; what is regarded as error has no rights against the truth.

Differences between the Churches

Within Christendom differing conceptions of this view of the nature of religious freedom are held. To decide to what extent these differing views were due to differences of theological standpoint and to what extent they were due to differences in circumstances is a matter of great interest. But here it is sufficient to point out that they in fact existed, and that to some extent they are due to differing circumstances in the situations of the Churches of which they are characteristic. At the one extreme there is the Roman position. The State has its proper sphere with which the Church should not concern itself. But the line of division between the two spheres is for the Church to mark out. And in any case it is the duty of the State to mould its conduct upon Divinely given moral law, which the infallible Church defines. On the

other hand, the Orthodox Churches have inherited the tradition of the Byzantine Empire, where the continued authority of the Emperor prevented the Church from realising the claims which the Roman Pontiff, in the absence of any strong secular authority, was able successfully to make. Of the Churches of the Reformation the Calvinist Churches tended to the Roman attitude. But because the infallible authority was now the Bible and not the Pope, and also because circumstances were by now very much changed, the area of life claimed for ecclesiastical control was considerably less. However, the fact that the Courts of the Church of Scotland are still, in law, Courts of the Realm serves as a reminder that the authority claimed and wielded by the Kirk in former centuries was something to be feared. The Anglicans and Lutherans tended to adopt a position rather nearer to that of the Orthodox. Both within the sphere of Church appointment and discipline, and in the matter of defining what lay within the competence of the State, these Churches permitted a much greater authority to the prince than he was conceded by either the Calvinists or the Romanists. An excellent illustration of the differences in tradition between the various Churches is afforded by the question of marriage and divorce, a matter quite crucial for both Church and State. Rome claims not only the right to lay down what is the Divine law on such matters, but also itself to administer the law through its ecclesiastical courts. The business of the State is simply to lend the support of the secular arm to the decisions of the Church. The Reformed allow the State a certain administrative and judicial competence in this field, as, for example, in the granting of divorces, but only so far as the State carries out the Divine law contained in Scripture and interpreted by the Church. On the other hand the Lutherans and the Orthodox have allowed the State a wider latitude, provided of course it gives support to the Church in its essential functions. For example, the State may itself decide what grounds of divorce are permissible and the Church will accept the ruling.

The Communist Attitude to Religious Freedom

The importance of this for the purpose immediately in hand is that it provides two clues essential for the understanding of the facts outlined in Chapter I. of this Report. In assessing the attitude of the Churches in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to the existing Communist Governments it is important to remember that the Churches

in these areas, by and large, have no tradition of successful resistance to the claims of the State, as, for example, is common in Western Europe.

The second point, and the more important, may be put this way: Communism adapts to its own use a secularised and therefore much more extreme form of the doctrine of freedom, characteristic of Rome. Just as for Rome true freedom is essentially ' freedom for the truth,' as defined by the infallible Church, so for the Communist true freedom, at any rate at this stage of the historical process, is ' freedom for the truth,' as defined by the Party, which is bearer of the destiny of the race. The ' freedom for truth ' of the Communist is more destructive of what we ordinarily call individual liberty than is that of Rome. However arbitrarily Rome may behave on occasion, it always recognises in Scripture, in tradition, and in reason some objective standards to which appeal may be made. However much on occasion it may seem to invade it, it does recognise a real autonomy in the secular world in the spheres of culture and of government. Communism precisely because of its purely secular character lacks both these limits to its authority. For it there is no eternal truth. Such truth as men may attain to is relative, and the product of the dialectical march of history. On the other hand it is necessarily totalitarian in its claim. It is the truth about the secular realm; and no other real exists for there to be any truth about.

It is this fact which underlies the Communist attitude to the Churches under its control. It follows inevitably that Communism must seek utterly to destroy any Christian claim to freedom in the second sense—the sense which in a more extreme fashion it itself adopts; the sense in which freedom is ' freedom for the truth ' against error. There can be no possibility of any compromise with a Christian claim to be the truth which ought to control the development of society. This is a prerogative which belongs to dialectical materialism alone. On the other hand, at first sight there may appear to be some concessions to freedom of the first type—the individualistic type characteristic of the thought of present-day Western Europe. From the Communist point of view religion is only a dream, though in some circumstances a socially very harmful dream. But provided there is no danger of these dreams finding any expression in action, men may be allowed individual freedom in their dreams. This impression is often increased by what is in fact mere expediency on the part of the Communists. Religion cannot be stamped out, or at any rate not for the present, therefore the aim should be to limit its influence with the least possible dis-

turbance and even, where it may be possible, to use it to further the purposes of the Party. Orthodoxy may be used to strengthen Russian patriotism and to serve as a gravitational pull to draw the Slav world into the Russian orbit. Protestant hostility to Rome may be turned to account. Church leaders may serve as more plausible agents for peace propaganda to the West than could be provided from within the ranks of the Party itself. The notion that Moscow has any greater measure of sympathy for the Western liberal idea of religious freedom, as the right of the individual to make up his mind upon ultimate questions, than it has for the Roman conception of religious freedom as the rights which the truth has against error, is pure illusion. The Party is the sole repository of truth, a truth which is as hostile to the 'truth of the individual' as it is to the truth of the Papal Church.

Communist Practice

This view will find ample justification from the facts of the Communist treatment of the Church as outlined in Chapter I. Freedom of worship, in the narrow sense of the term, is normally now permitted and is provided for in the Constitution of most of the Communist-controlled countries. But it should be remembered that it has not always been permitted, and could again be withdrawn should such a policy be deemed expedient in the interests of the Party. It should also be remembered that in China, ministers are often compelled to include matter provided by the authorities in their sermons, while there, as in other parts of the Communist world, the closing of Churches on varying pretexts in fact often limits the right to freedom of worship ostensibly guaranteed by the Constitution.

Once the narrow field of worship is left behind, the restrictive nature of the Communist policy towards the Church becomes much more evident. In order to exist the Church requires not only the opportunity of public worship, but also the right to teach—especially the young—to educate for its ministry, to publish literature, and to evangelise. Furthermore it must have freedom to appoint its own officers, and to discipline its members. Finally, it must have property at its disposal for the carrying out of its work. In all these respects the policy of Communist governments towards the Church has varied greatly. In no case are the facilities left to the Church to be compared to those which it has been accustomed to enjoy in the Western democracies. Often they are less adequate than they were previous to the rise of Communism in the countries concerned, but there are cases

where for the present they would seem to be on a more generous scale But in all these cases the factor which would appear to be the decisive one is the Party's estimate of what is expedient in its own interests in the political and social situation, as in the Party's view it exists. It is only from this point of view that the extraordinary differences of policy as between different times and different places can be explained. If it be argued that in these countries a measure of Government control is no new thing, it must be pointed out that control by people who, with whatever practical indifference or concern with the political implications of what they are doing, are still nominally Christian, or at any rate not overtly opposed to Christianity is one thing. Control by people who are the open and avowed enemies of the faith, whose whole position is bound up with the opinion that it is a pernicious superstition, which it is their bounden duty to destroy as an essential contribution to the cause of human progress, is quite another thing.

But there is another area of the Church's task in which no freedom whatsoever is permitted. It is increasingly the view of Christians everywhere that the prophetic task of reflecting upon the secular problems of men, and of making pronouncements upon them is an essential part of the duty of the Church in the world. There is a growing consciousness that the Church in past years has failed grievously in not carrying out this part of its mission. Indeed Communists themselves have been known to level the charge at the Church that it failed to speak out against the evils of the Industrial Revolution as it should have done. However, once the Communist Party finds itself in power it makes quite sure that the Church shall for the future have no opportunity of redeeming this error. All Christian criticism of political or social matters is absolutely forbidden. Indeed the Church is normally prevented from carrying out these works of mercy which have characterised it, even when it has been most aloof from any concern with questions of political or social reform, and which previously have never been interfered with, even by the most authoritarian and reactionary Governments.

Lessons for the Church in Britain

For Christians in this country there are two principal lessons to be learned:—

(*a*) It is quite wrong for Christians, as they tend to do, to base their defence against Communism, and their positive action in the com-

munity upon the assumption that the Church's claim to freedom rests properly only upon the individualistic concept of freedom. The notion contains a vital truth, a truth about which we must be concerned because it is one of the implications of the Gospel. But it is obvious that the principle cannot be carried to its logical conclusion. To do so would be to destroy not only the cohesion of society but the possibility of morality. The principle rests upon an optimistic view of human nature. Men are essentially so good that if only they were left to themselves a natural harmony of interests would emerge. The attempt to get over the difficulty by saying that people must have freedom except where it would infringe the liberty of others breaks down ultimately because any action of any importance almost always does affect other people's liberty. What in effect this principle amounts to is that the freedom of the individual is limited by the feelings and custom of the majority, or at any rate of those who control the structure of society. Individual freedom cannot be unlimited. It is therefore impossible to make the achieving of a harmony of view among a group of free individuals the basis for the deciding of vital and far-reaching conflicts—conflicts which are always in the last resort conflicts of faith. The problem is not to settle which faith to adopt by a show of hands, as it were, but to discover a faith in the shelter of which the individual may be permitted a reasonable freedom of action. There is therefore a profound truth in the traditional attitude of Christendom, the attitude for which at the present time the Roman Church stands as a quite conspicuous protagonist, but which is also an essential part of the Reformed tradition. The free choice of the individual is important, but as important is ' freedom for the truth.' The error of the traditional view is not that it asserts this primacy for ' freedom for the truth.' It is rather that the Church too readily regarded the Divine assistance and guidance promised to it, as its possession to be used to establish it in security. It did not understand it as a word of Divine Judgment spoken against the Church, as well as a word of Redemption and guidance spoken for the Church. It therefore failed to recognise that the demand for the freedom of the individual, even where it was expressed in terms to which, in loyalty to its faith, the Church must be utterly opposed, might contain a word of Divine Judgment, to which the Church ought in humility to listen. Because of this failing it could not rise above the feelings of the time and often resorted quite prematurely and unnecessarily to the use of force for the suppression of error.

In this matter the Churches of the Reformation have a quite especial duty to perform in the contemporary world. They may share the insight which Rome possesses so conspicuously that freedom for truth has a proper primacy even against freedom for the individual. But because of their different theological standpoint they can hold in proper dialectical balance, in a way which Rome always finds to be difficult, the complementary truth of the importance of the latter freedom. The tension between the two forms of freedom will always remain. There is no theoretical solution of it. It can be resolved only in part, in action, and by Grace. By Grace there is given an earnest of that harmony between the will of the individual and the truth of God which belongs to the Kingdom of God in its fullness. But here we live in hope and not in possession, by faith and not by sight. For us freedom for truth, freedom for the Christian faith to mould and suggest the fundamental values by which the nation lives is the essential ground for the maintenance of freedom of the individual. The latter is the means by which the former may be saved from that corruption of power which would destroy its influence. Freedom for the individual to speak back to the Church is the essential condition of the Church's purity.

(*b*) The second lesson that has to be learned from the circumstances of the Churches in Communist-controlled countries is that constitutional arrangements are only of importance in so far as they genuinely reflect the real structure of social forces. To judge from the constitutions of these lands it would appear that the Churches have a far greater measure of freedom than is in fact the case. This is a fact which it is of particular importance for the Churches of this country, which occupy an exceedingly favourable position legally, to understand. The assumption that the constitutional position provides a real account of the true position of the Church in the community might in certain circumstances be a very dangerous one. The position which constitutionally the Church still holds, in countries such as Britain, is a relic of days when its hold upon the mass of the population was not seriously open to question. That day has passed. But the recognition of the fact need not compel adoption of the view that this is an entirely post-Christian era, and that the only proper strategy for the Church is to prepare for the catacombs. There are three points to be made:—

(i) The national recognition of religion is of great value, even though practising Christians may be a minority in the

community. It is not merely that the association of the Church with occasions of national importance has a certain influence in the way of suggestion upon the minds of citizens. What is perhaps more important is that, were the Christian influence eliminated, what would be left would not merely be the absence of some measure of suggestion that religion is a matter of importance, but some other type of ceremonial which would suggest that other features of the life of the community are of prime importance. An instance in one sphere of the national life is the Coronation Service, in another sphere the importance of education having a Christian rather than a secularist orientation.

(ii) There is no reason why the Church, though probably a minority of the community, should not continue to wield this influence. In this country there is very widely diffused a sort of watered-down Christianity which, while quite unsatisfactory from any seriously Christian standpoint, is nevertheless greatly to be preferred to most other types of popular sentiment. Although themselves not practising Christians those who have this type of outlook are very happy that the Church should have this position of primacy within the community.

(iii) It should however be clearly understood that the maintenance of this kind of position depends upon the Church and its officers and people generally being held in real respect. Whether or not the Church is held in respect in this way will depend upon the part it plays in the life of the community, in standing for justice and truth, in helping forward true learning and culture, and upon the impression made by its prominent members both lay and clerical. In present conditions it is vital that the Church should possess a deep social concern, and should be diligent in bringing Christian insight to bear upon the problems of this area of life.

To retain such a position within the life of the community or, as some would feel, to regain it, the members of the Church must truly become as those that serve—furthering in the sphere of culture, of justice, and of personal relationships the true good of the community, being as it were in their own persons sources of creative living. It ought, of course, to be unnecessary to point out that this, to be done effectively, must be done quite spontaneously and unselfconsciously.

Only genuine love of people, genuine interest in the problems of society, and in the realms of art and learning are of the slightest use. An interesting example of how an institution, though believed by many to belong to a past age, may be rehabilitated and given a significant place in the contemporary community by unselfconscious service of those occupying it, is provided by the British monarchy. An instance of how an ecclesiastical office may become a significant factor in the life of the community for many who would otherwise ignore, or even despise it, is provided by William Temple's tenure of the Sees of York and Canterbury. The same thing happens constantly in the case of many a faithful parish minister or layman, who with quiet integrity seeks to relate his faith to his profession and sphere of personal relationships.

The type of activity and indeed of personality which could thus be freely respected is a by-product of genuine Christian faith. By this is not meant that only those who consciously profess the faith can achieve this quality of living. It is rather that when the faith is accepted fully and sincerely it produces these qualities of life and character. A real appropriation in life of the truths of the faith, of the knowledge of sin, and of God's grace is productive of a character in which realism is combined with hope, a sense of purpose with humility, and the capacity for making decisive moral judgments with charity. Professor Butterfield in the work from which quotation has already been made makes the point: 'Those who preach the Gospel for the sake of the Gospel, leaving the further consequences of their action to Providence, have always served the world better than they knew, better than those who worked with mundane purposes in mind—sometimes they served the world better than they desired or intended to do, better even than they would have liked if they could have foreseen the consequences.' It would of course be quite wrong to interpret this fact as implying that we should therefore ignore the problems of this world, concentrating upon the next. To do this would be precisely not to preach the Gospel for the sake of the Gospel.

III

SUGGESTED ACTION

In its Report to the last Assembly the Commission recommended, among other things, that the General Assembly should enjoin Presbyteries to take steps:—

(*a*) to encourage Ministers and Kirk Sessions to start groups for Bible Study within their congregations, and

(*b*) as local circumstances permit, to arrange for courses of instruction of the type which have been described.

(*c*) It also recommended that groups be formed of a more specialised character, concerned with the attempt to discover the implications of the insights of Christian faith in different aspects of our common life. It is with these three recommendations that this section largely deals.

But before taking them in order, it is necessary to say that nothing will meet Communism as an opponent of the Christian faith which is not founded in, and does not draw its inspiration from, a deeper concern on the part of the people of the Church, a deeper devotion to the spiritual foundations of life which are in the Christian religion. Christian people, to put it plainly, must work harder at their religious beliefs and practices. They must be better Churchmen, and give to the Church, and expect from the Church, more than is usual with many people to-day. A sense of urgency must seize the Church—a conviction that God is speaking in the events of our time, that we are called to discern His Judgments in what is happening, in order that, understanding, we may obey. Above all, there must be a return to the fundamentals of the Faith.

It will not avail much for the Church in Scotland or anywhere else to adopt splendid plans and proposals and to set up machinery of education if the Church has not behind these plans a renewed sense of

dedication to the cause of Christ. Fundamentally, the only answer to Communism is a reborn Church, and that means rededicated members of the Christian communities. Communism is only one of the many enemies of the Christian Church and Christian Faith; the worst enemy of the Church is indifference within her own borders. If this necessity is frankly faced the Church may go on to make its plans, which will then help to create, and also find their strength in, the newly dedicated community; and these plans, in the light of the recommendations to the last General Assembly, should take these forms:—

I. *The education of the adult membership of the Churches must be attempted with new aims and a new vigour.*—The success of the cell-technique makes it advisable to bring it again within the compass of the Church's activities. There was a day in the Church of Scotland, not so long ago, when this cell-technique was practised in the form of study circles, in which small groups of men and women met to talk over and discuss problems of religious significance. It was generally directed towards the study of Foreign Missions, and there are many who owe their interest in the missionary work of the Church just to such groups. The cell was also used in the Student Christian Movement, in Universities, to serve a like purpose; the groups met at suitable times, which they themselves chose, said their prayers together, and encouraged one another in the faith. So valuable was this that a large proportion of the leaders of the Ecumenical Movement, especially in the English-speaking world, owe their interest in the world-wide Church just to such gatherings; indeed the Ecumenical Movement itself owes part of its inspiration to the Student Christian Movement and the Young Men's Christian Association, both of which, it will be noted, are lay movements.

Such study circles should be brought back; but they should not be limited to the study of Foreign Missions, though that would naturally, especially in these days, be part of the reference. Such circles should include in their studies those political and social and economic questions which have religious bearings, as well as the Christian teaching on man's place in the universe under God, and indeed any subject which lies within the compass of the daily life and thinking of Christian people. There should be no limit to the age of those taking part, except that it should not be younger than about sixteen years of age. It is impressive to see in many American congregations men and women of mature age

attending the Sunday School in classes of their own age group, and to meet a Bible Class of men, all of them over forty years of age, meeting for an hour before the morning service.

If anything like this is to come in our Church, two problems will arise:—

1. *Leaders must be trained*, else the study circles will not have the impetus or the fullness of result which they are capable of having. This task may be laid upon the Presbyteries, though in some cases—especially in the country—there will be difficulties both of leadership and of membership of the circles. Also it must be recognised that it would be an unwarranted waste of time and energy for a set of leaders to be trained separately in each parish. For this purpose parishes in villages, towns, and cities ought to combine, and leadership should not be confined to membership of the congregation in which the study circle is held. The General Assembly might, *e.g.*, appoint a central body to organise and direct the studies of the circles under the auspices of the Presbyteries or local groups within the Presbytery; but it has to be recognised that only a strenuous endeavour to explain to the study circles, both what they are meant to achieve and what the issues at stake are, will achieve much—and much needs to be achieved.

2. *The second question is that of time* for these study circles. They will not make their biggest impact on the problems that we face unless adequate time is given to them, and Sunday evenings seem to be the most suitable occasions, though, if there are many study circles in a congregation as there ought to be in large congregations, weekly meetings may suit some circles better. We have, unfortunately, to face the fact that in the great bulk of our congregations the evening services are composed of those who have already been at morning service, or of those whose needs could be met. They might be met by united worship in a central Church. The Commission feels that in a large number of cases the time of the evening service and after might be given with profit to this adult education in religion. In this way time could be found for the very urgent exercise which is demanded in the present situation.

II. *With regard to the groups of a more specialised character*, to which already reference has been made, *the Commission recommends to the General Assembly that it give heed* to the efforts now being made by the World Council of Churches at the Institute of Bossey, near Geneva,

by the Lutheran Church of Germany in its Academien, of which it now has three; by the Dutch Reformed Church in its Institution at Dreibergen, near Utrecht; and by the Orthodox Church of Yugo-Slavia. In all these, and other Churches which are considering setting them up, a real effort is made by short courses and long courses to train various groups of the community in the implications of the Christian faith for them. In these, for a long week-end, or for three months, or a six months' course, or for a holiday course of a week, men of various types come together to find what it means for them to practise the Christian faith and life in their daily avocations. For instance, at Bossey, the plans of which are published a year ahead, courses may be arranged for various kinds of people, such as doctors, lawyers, journalists, politicians, teachers, divinity students, ministers, and others. To these courses men come from many countries, study their problems in the light of the Christian Gospel, return to their work, their district and their congregations, inspired with a new vision and ready to pass it on. This means a staff adequate for the task. It also means a central place where up to fifty people can be housed during the course. It does not mean that in this country, at first at any rate, a large organisation should be set up, but it does mean that there should be an organisation ready to function at Christmas, Easter, and summer holidays to begin with, and at week-ends if the demand could be created, so that the Church of Scotland, possibly in union with other Churches in Scotland, should be able in this way to create cells of light and inspiration throughout the parishes of the Church. It is not within the remit to do more than show the General Assembly what it believes to be the right course. It is for the General Assembly, if it so decides to take further steps; but the Commission is convinced of the urgent necessity of this special work, and recommends it warmly.

The Commission has noted with high hopes the new ' laymen's movement ' begun under the auspices of the Home Board. This seeks to gather into fellowship men and women of Christian character and outlook in factories, offices, shops, schools, and wherever people are gathered together in numbers in the pursuit of their daily work, in order that they may make their Christian witness felt and be no longer individual solitaries, but a body of Christians encouraging one another and finding room among their fellows for the exercise of a Christian minority. No doubt the Home Board will report to the Assembly on this most significant development, but the Commission passes to the

Assembly the following account of 'Christian Witness in a Berlin Factory,' which appeared in the *Ecumenical Press Service* on 1st February 1952:—

'When Walter Lange, a repatriated Protestant prisoner-of-war, started work as an unskilled hand in the Opel works in Berlin, he tried to turn conversation among his mates to the problem of God and of the meaning of life. But to begin with he encountered only snubs or smiles.

But, to quote the Berlin Protestant weekly "Die Kirche" of 13th January 1952, "Walter Lange would not give tit-for-tat." And so gradually his colleagues dropped their gibes against "the Christian of the Department."

Then one day at the midday break they confronted him with a Communist official. A ding-dong discussion followed. And the result? Soon afterwards a Roman Catholic who had heard of the affair came to see him. They very soon agreed that something must be done in this factory, which employs 20,000 workmen. And so a search was begun for the Christians scattered throughout the factory. And they were quite numerous, but they were mostly people who were afraid to demonstrate the fact of their Christianity in front of others. . . . Six months later he was supported by a body of 1500 men and women from the various different buildings and departments of the factory. They met to discuss the running of the factory, and they submitted practical suggestions to its administrative and consultative committees.

But that was not sufficient. They got men from the Christian Churches, too, to come and tell the workmen something about the Church of Christ to-day. They organised a tour of the works for 180 Protestant pastors and Church leaders, who were able to see for the first time in what surroundings the workman spends the eight hours of the day. And thus it came about that, in a subsequent discussion with the authorities of their Church and of the factory, 20 pastors declared themselves prepared to work for four weeks each at the Opel factory. In this way 80 workmen were enabled to attend a week's retreat arranged by the Protestant organisation for activity among workers.

Then came the election of the factory's consultative com-

mittee last year. Hitherto it had consisted exclusively of 26 former Marxists. On this occasion 50 per cent of the employees voted for the candidates of the Christian nucleus—that is to say, 12 convinced Christians took their seats on the consultative committee. A beginning has also been made towards bringing the preaching of Christ's message to the main body of the employees. In addition, the workmen are being brought back to their parishes and Churches. Week-end retreats organised by both confessions are helping to work out the basic problems linking Catholic and Protestant together, and to draw conclusions of value for the factory as a whole.'

Another movement of great importance to the Church in the United States of America, and worthy of emulation in other lands, is reported in *The Presbyterian World* at the end of 1951. It is another sign of the rising tide of lay witness in the Church and in daily life, and brings hope in the serious situation which faces the Churches in every land. The report reads:—

'A " nation-wide interdenominational movement to mobilise 10,000,000 men in Christian service to Church and community " was formally launched in Cincinnati, 6th to 7th October.

This first Church-sponsored movement of its kind " aims to enlist rank-and-file Church members across denominational lines in a lay ministry " to assist pastors in 147,000 Churches. It has the backing of virtually all the major Protestant Churches and four Eastern Orthodox communions.

United Church Men of America, under the lay leadership of Chairman Lem T. Jones, Kansas City candy manufacturer, and managerial board of 262 Churchmen from virtually every State in the Union, will operate as a general department of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

To begin to mobilise laymen, mass meetings will be held in 18 key U.S. cities during 1952.'

In addition, the Commission feels that there would be considerable gain in the whole life of Scotland if the congregations were to press forward with the conception, first, of their own sense of community, of fellowship and friendship, as a body of Christian people, one in interests, sympathies and endeavours, but also as a constituent part of

the wider communities, the parish in which they are placed, the denomination to which they belong, and the Christian community of all denominations. The sense of community is always in danger of being broken up; yet it is a vital element in Christian life and outlook. A congregation which is not a community, and is not making a vital contribution to the sense of community within its secular area, is not a congregation but a gathering of self-contained individuals. It is fundamental that human beings are saved as individuals, but only in order that they may enter into, and form part of, the community of like-minded people which we call the Church. This element of our faith needs new emphasis to-day, so that adequate contribution may be made by the congregations to the work and worship of the Church to which they belong, to the body social in the midst of which they live, and to the world-wide Church of which their denomination forms a part.

On behalf of the Commission,

GEORGE M. DRYBURGH, *Chairman*
CRAWFORD MILLER, *Secretary*

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